

Editorials

Human Rights

Amnesty International which has been gaining a great deal of respect for its undaunted and carefully-done championing of the cause of "prisoners of conscience" around the world has come up with a doubleheader right in line with the recent pronouncements of Pope John Paul II regarding human rights.

The London-based Nobel Prize winning organization has released a major report condemning capital punishment as violating "the right to live" and calls it "the most cruel, inhuman and degrading of all forms of punishment."

It issued its special report to begin a worldwide campaign to abolish the death penalty.

Then, scarcely allowing time for breath, AI launched another global drive, this one for the release of "all prisoners of conscience" in the Soviet Union and also called for an end to "the abuse of psychiatry for political purposes" in the U.S.S.R.

AI told President Brezhnev that it chose this time to focus attention on such Soviet oppression because of the forthcoming 62nd anniversary of the Russian Revolution and also because of the upcoming 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow.

Coincidentally, it has been reported that Pope John Paul II may ask to visit Moscow for the Games.

Amnesty International told Brezhnev of 300 in-

dividual cases that it's working on of persons "we believe are imprisoned for political or religious reasons in your country."

According to Religious News Service, it also appealed for an end to confinement and torture of prisoners of conscience in psychiatric hospitals in the Soviet Union. It said it knew of "more than 100 prisoners of conscience who have been forcibly confined to psychiatric hospitals since 1975 because of the nonviolent exercise of their rights."

"Virtually anyone from any national, religious or social group who publicly criticizes your government's practices is in danger of being certified as mentally ill," AI charged.

"Symbolic of the human rights violations in the U.S.S.R. are the harassment, imprisonment and ill-treatment of those Soviet citizens who, since the Soviet government signed the Helsinki Pact in August 1975, have monitored violations of human rights provisions of this accord."

AI, in addition to these serious charges which, we hope, the Soviet Union will find it difficult to avoid, also charged Moscow with violations of religious rights.

It is pleasing to note that this organization, which is not religiously affiliated, reflects the same goals of the Catholic Church, particularly of the present pontiff, in pursuing the cause of human rights on the world scene.

Living Saint

If we may be pragmatic for a bit, we cannot imagine a more fortuitous turn of events for the image of the

Roman Catholic Church than has been provided in recent weeks, first by Pope John Paul II and then by Mother Teresa. Any Church capable of producing two such contemporary heroic figures could be excused if it took a slight bow.

The Pope was front page and top of the broadcast news throughout his recent visits to Ireland and the United States. And when the accounts of this charismatic traveler began to wane, another of the great lights of the Church, it seemed almost on divine cue, was thrust into the fore.

No person could witness the Christian message more sincerely and effectively than this missionary woman who, coincidentally, also comes from an Iron Curtain country, Yugoslavia.

Since she heard the "call" in 1946 to serve "the poorest of the poor," she has selflessly emulated the life of Christ. The parallels are many and obvious, the most striking of which has been her choice to work among those stricken by leprosy, much as did the Master Himself.

Mother Teresa does not seek temporal acclaim, although she will find commendable use for the \$190,000 cash prize that goes with the Nobel honor. But while she avoids center stage as is her wont, the rest of us Catholics might be forgiven if we bask in the warmth of the limelight being accorded this great woman.

It is spiritually uplifting to contemplate the world paying homage to a living saint.

and Opinions

Similarities To Holocaust

Editor:

While watching "Holocaust" recently, I was struck by the parallel with today's society. Although we express horror over atrocities perpetrated by Nazi Germany, we are as blind to the holocausts in our day and as apathetic as most Germans were then.

The current holocaust is especially similar. Like the Nazis, we developed a special vocabulary to avoid speaking the truth, and have succeeded in deceiving even ourselves. ("Special handling" and "relocation have given way to "termination of pregnancy" and "freedom of choice.")

Like them, we declare a social problem exists and develop a non-solution which involves exterminating millions of lives; both societies deny this, claiming these lives are "sub-human." (We take care to ignore all scientific data to the contrary.) It does not bother us that many of these "sub-humans" are tortured prior to death; embryology shows us that the unborn child's nervous system is functioning by the third month, therefore reacting to stimuli such as pain - this means he or she suffers in the process of being vacuumed into pieces or slowly poisoned by salt solution (it takes from several to 24 hours for death to occur by this method). We choose to ignore the fact that this child has separate and distinct parts and systems (nervous, circulatory, etc.) and thus is not at all a part of the woman's body, but merely housed and fed there.

Why do we insist on reacting, rather than responding, to social problems? Why won't we use our vast resources and personal energy to find true solutions? If we choose to continue on this path, we may ourselves one day be the victims of someone's holocaust.

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Reader Finds Column 'Bad'

Editor:

I cannot say that Fr. Cuddy's column for Wednesday, Oct. 10, hit a new low; indeed it has been consistently bad. Fr. Cuddy delights in taking the cheap shot - his motto reads, "grasp the opportunity!" One can only regard with pity a man who is so clearly threatened by the advent of a new order.

It was heartening, however, to read of the installation of Rev. Judy Lee Hay as senior pastor of Calvary Episcopal - St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. She is the first woman in the U.S. to be so named. Somewhere, hearts and minds have been swept clean of narrowness; of low-thinking; of logical fallacies. Somewhere the Spirit is being allowed to work; somewhere, the humble will listen.

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Last Supper: No Women

Editor:

In the wake of our

beloved Pope John Paul II's visit to our beloved country, I would like to make an observation as to the polite demand made by Sister Theresa Kane who, from newspaper accounts, represents 20,000 nuns which includes, sorry to say, priests and others, that the Pope give serious consideration to their, as they believe, call to the priesthood of the Catholic Church. I take that to mean not just a call to religious life.

Since I feel and believe that Jesus Christ being God, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity, was fully aware of what he would be doing prior to and at the Last Supper when and where for the first and only time he would be ordaining priests would not if it was HIS WILL hence GOD'S WILL that women should be included, would not have had some present, including some who would be following Him the next day on His journey on His way to the Cross and/or

those rushing to His tomb early Easter morning and most surely He would have included His Blessed Mother who the next day would from the foot of His cross hear Him say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing."

I further don't believe that during that period of 1,900 years until the advent of ERA, Jesus, that is to say God, would leave His Church with such a misunderstanding as He was always quick to correct any error in understanding, as on the occasion I call to mind when He promised to give us His Flesh to eat and Blood to drink and those present said, "This is a hard saying and who can believe it." Jesus said to Peter will you also go away with Peter replying, "Lord, to whom shall we go."

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Must Work For Life

Editor:

Like a herald proclaiming God's message before men, Pope John Paul II swept through the American scene, reaffirming our ancient and time-tested Catholic values in ringing and unmistakably clear language. It was fitting that the last of his American homilies should be delivered on the Mall in Washington, D.C., almost within the shadow of the Capitol Building and surrounded by those national shrines which continually extol the lives and values of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln.

I wonder if any of the lawmakers on Capitol Hill were listening to that voice as it thundered out against the killing of any human life, regardless of its stage of development. "I do not hesitate," the Pope said, "to proclaim before you and before the world that all human life - from the moment of conception and

through all subsequent stages - is sacred."

As one reviews his homily today, one cannot help but think that perhaps the Holy Father is calling each of us to some kind of positive action in the fight for life. It is almost certain, however, that while the role in this fight must differ with each individual, each doing what he or she can, no one who calls himself or herself a Catholic can be totally indifferent to this cause. In this respect, there is very positive action which can be taken by all of us this November, and that is to vote for all of the candidates who support the right to life. Your vote will reflect your support of a basic Catholic view, so eloquently expressed by Pope John Paul II at his last Mass in America, when he said, "When God gives life, it is forever."

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"BLESS MY DAD AND THANKS FOR LETTING HIM GET KITTY DOWN FROM THE TREE"

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.

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