

Editorials

Genocide

Kurt Waldheim, the secretary general of the United Nations, is a man not given to exaggeration. He also is a person closely attuned to the tragedies of the world over the past few decades. He also is a religious and sensitive man.

So when he calls the situation in Cambodia "a national tragedy, the proportion of which may have no parallel in history," it is realistic to believe him.

The people have been victimized by two wars within 10 years and by two despotic regimes. Part of the suffering was inflicted by our own country when we bombed and invaded Cambodia during the Vietnam War. In 1975 the Pol Pot regime took over, with the support of the Communist Chinese.

Then in 1978, Cambodia was involved in a second war as the Vietnamese backed by the Soviet Union overthrew the Pol Pot, although the latter remains in force in western Cambodia and the two sides engage in a civil war.

So while the world's great powers engage in power struggles, the people of Cambodia suffer. The Pol Pot regime reduced the population by an estimated 50 per cent through its genocidal policies. And of the remaining 4 or 5 million Cambodians, half face the possibility of starvation.

Less than 20 per cent of Cambodia farmland is under cultivation; U.N. and Red Cross officials estimate that 900 tons of food per day will be needed for the next six months; and the saddest fact is that of those Cambodians starving, about 90 per cent are children.

Among organizations trying to stem even more widespread disaster is Catholic Relief Services. It has been on the scene ministering to a million Cambodians

along the Thai border; it has organized 25 "Mercy Convoys" carrying food, medical supplies and clothing into Cambodia and it is cooperating with European charitable organizations in sending a boat from Thailand with more supplies.

Religious leaders, including Cardinal Terence Cooke, have appealed to the President and he has complied. Jimmy Carter has pledged up to \$70 million to avert what he called "a tragedy of genocidal proportions."

Bishop Clark has asked "some special response from each parish and from everyone of you" to this urgent need. We have printed his appeal and other pertinent details on Page 1.

When Pope John Paul II visited our country last month he painted verbally the haunting image of the 20th Century Lazarus waiting at our door for the crumbs from our overflowing table. The Asian situation provides a direfully urgent opportunity to respond.

and Opinions

Trivializing The Word

Editor:

A story in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, Friday, Oct. 26 headlined "Catholics may alter 'sexist' prayers" (Page 8B) concerned the efforts of some to drop the word "men" in the Eucharistic prayer that now proclaims that Christ's blood is "shed for you and for all men." Talk about trivializing Christ's message! How long would generations of Catholic women have remained in the Church if they hadn't been bright enough to know that Christ died for them, too, and that the word "men" has always been a perfectly adequate word to refer to the species which includes all thinking beings, men and women.

After the magnificence of the message of Pope John Paul II when, like the disciples at Emmaus, did not our hearts burn within us, to descend so quickly from headlines of the sublime to the asinine, is depressing to say the least. Let Church leaders in this country get on with the real problems to be solved - millions of unborn children denied the right to life, marriage and family life in shambles, boat people needing homes, thousands starving in Cambodia, etc., etc., and our bishops being led by the nose by a vocal few to debate the pressing issue of "sexist" language! Believe me, these self-centered few do not speak for the majority of women and have no right to pretend that they do. The enthusiasm and love shown for a John Paul II and a Mother Teresa, especially their obvious appeal to the young, should be a guideline to what all "men" are really hungering and thirsting for.

Marie Jessmer
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Objects To Movie

Editor:

I am a Roman Catholic who, very sad to say, has been a member of the silent majority too long.

Recently I read an in-

terview given by two priests on the movie, "The Life of Brian." Not aware of what the movie was about, I did not question what was said in the interview.

On Monday morning, Oct. 15, I read a writeup about this movie that turned my stomach and then and there vowed I would no longer be silent. Are our spiritual leaders (our priests and nuns) too busy protesting our Holy Father's statement "no women priests" that they have become blind to so many moral topics?

I read that in this movie Our Blessed Mother is depicted as a prostitute and that Christ is the product of a rape by a Roman soldier.

I resent this. Why aren't we protesting such a movie? Is our silence condoning this?

Perhaps I am but a small voice, but with all my breath I will shout to be heard. Let's bring respect back to God, His Mother and our religion. I am sure there are many silent majority Roman Catholics that are willing to sign a petition to stop this slanderous movie, so I am asking our spiritual leaders, "Will any of you come forth and lead us in this crusade?"

Laura Campione
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New Malls Immoral

Editor:

Immoral and disheartening. That's our view of the proposed construction of either shopping mall in Webster. And our basic reasons are the destruction of the local businessman, further consolidation of economic power in the hands of a few (the major chains) and the continued middle class American addiction to materialism.

A statement was made that a mall will bring no minuses. Well, how about these tradeoffs. For the convenience of the location (gas saved for local residents), we suffer the now

stronger inducements (Sale! Unbelievable values!) to shop more frequently (gas lost) and to browse in the other stores for impulse buying. Our family was first attracted to Webster because of the inaccessibility of a major mall made us think twice whether we really needed something or merely wanted it. This inaccessibility has been a blessing in disguise for us in that time spent shopping has been traded for more family time. For the centralization of all the stores and the local jobs supplied, we sacrifice the local merchants. Many of the store owners in the village, or in Webster or Eastway plazas, are not especially wealthy, nor do they want to be. It's pleasant and friendly to have conversations with the local proprietors and to watch their kids get on the school bus down the street. What will happen to these families when the parents' business dwindles to a trickle? Will we still patronize them, or will we be lured to "quality goods and selection" over a quality relationship? This is the tradeoff of people vs. things in action, i.e. is the higher quality object (purchaseable at the mall) more valuable to us than the support we can give to our neighbor-store owner? The mere suggestion (as in the Oct. 24 Webster Herald) of \$100 million passing through any mall in a year's time is an obscenity that cries out for justice. How can this fact be reconciled with the front page pictures of the starving Third World? Do we really need an addition of 20 to 30 clothing stores in Webster? In Monroe County?

This year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, Mother Teresa, upon visiting the U.S. commented that our country was the most spiritually impoverished she had ever seen. Pope John Paul II warned us Americans of our "frenzy of consumerism."

We do not believe that the material benefits of such a shopping convenience outweigh the erosion of relationships that will follow both within and among families. The "values" offered by this mall will make a mockery of true values like justice, community and interpersonal relationship.

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Mary Was Ordained

Editor:

Jesus said to Philip, a loved disciple, with weariness, "after I have been with you all this time you still do not know me" (John 14:9).

Women with vocation to ordination say wearily to loved fellow church men: "How long have we been with you and you still do not know us."

The forest stands in way of the tree. There was a woman ordained before the Last Supper, Holy Father, and I suggest she equals the twelve put together, and more. If it is the function of the priesthood to bring God to man and man to God, then Mary was ordained by God, and celebrated the mystery of the Mass from the conception of Jesus to the birth of Jesus. She was not at the Last Supper, as the Holy Father observed, ordination is not twice performed.

The first Church was given to the Jews and Peter was instructed to extend it to the Gentiles (Acts 10:47). The first ordination by the Trinity was to Mary and extended later by Christ to the apostles.

Beware, Holy Father, of rules and traditions, by such were the Jews of Jesus's day led. Jesus taught us to be led by love and the Holy Spirit, and we are weary that we have been with you so long and you do not know us, and see the Spirit moving in us.

There is both warning and comfort in Christ's statement that the first will be last and the last shall be first in the kingdom. It should make leaders reflective, and women with priestly vocation joyfully patient in the humility of St. Francis, for the declaration of the movement and blessing of the Holy Spirit among us.

"Behold, I come to make all things new."

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Jesus Waits For Us

Editor:

It was truly a wonderful sight to see the pictures of people in the hundreds of thousands in Ireland and this country waiting for hours in cold rain and windy weather just to catch a glimpse, to honor, and to welcome our wonderful Holy Father.

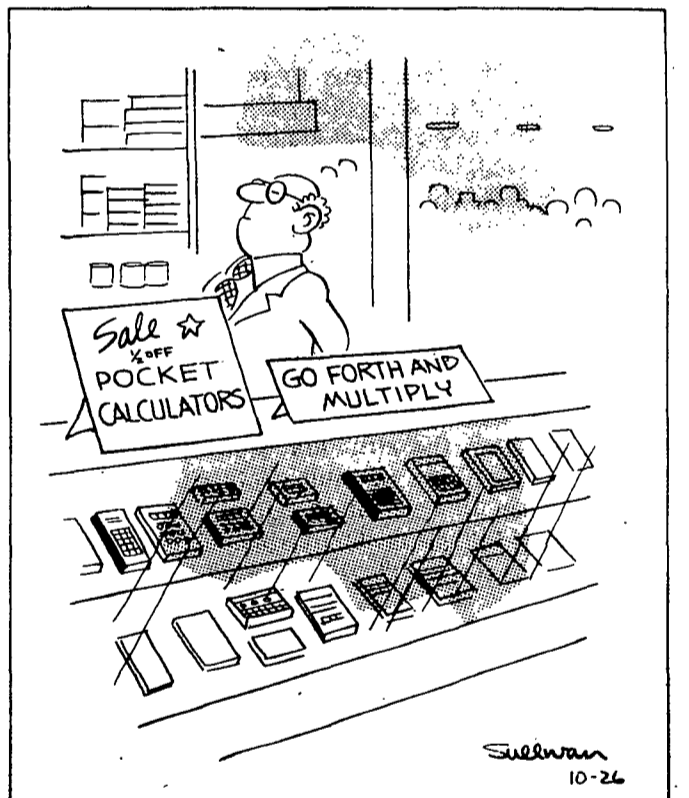
Yet how few there are that stop in to our churches to pay a visit for another, far more loving, kind and gentle than anyone could ever be -

Jesus, patiently waiting to welcome and listen to His little ones, young or old. He will never reject us. He is never too busy. And all He asks is our love! He, our Lord, doesn't need anything else!

Or does Jesus have to say to us, as He so often said to His disciples, "Oh, ye of little faith!"

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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 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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