

Editorials

Children's Year?

The International Year of the Child is drawing to a close and, sad to relate, things just are not going that well for the younger people of the world. We hope that some of the attention focused on the often dire plight of our children provides continued impetus to better their conditions.

Undoubtedly it was too much to expect that those who have mishandled the world into its present mess would really take seriously erasing abuse of the world's children. When we accept as normal the downgrading of the family unit, when we diminish the importance of parenting, when we do away with the youngest of the young, how then could it be expected that we are going to act out of concern for suffering children?

If this sounds hyperbolic, consider these recently disclosed facts:

More than 50 percent of the world's refugee population today is composed of children. These include children torn from native lands, rootless migrant children and ghetto children alienated from the mainstream American culture. These facts were brought to light at a recent symposium on the In-

ternational Year of the Child under the auspices of the Governor's Commission in New York City.

A sad contemplation, but not as sickening as the tragic details revealed by Amnesty International which released details of 35 cases of children who have been arrested, imprisoned, tortured, separated from their parents, or murdered as a result of political, racial or religious persecution by governments.

Religious News Service reports that AI, a Nobel Prize-winning organization that champions the cause of "prisoners of conscience," stated that 100 children were whipped, beaten, bayoneted to death or suffocated in the Central African Empire in April of 1979 and that 5,000 young people were slaughtered in Ethiopia during the "Red Terror" between December 1977 and February 1978.

Such general statistics are disheartening but the impact is sharper when the cases get specific. The AI report cites the case of a mother who alleged that in 1975 her 3-year-old daughter had been tortured before her eyes for four days in a Chilean detention center. The purpose, she said, was to force her to divulge information about the whereabouts of her husband, a trade unionist who opposed the Chilean junta.

Children are among our most vulnerable people so it

follows that those who accept violence as a modus operandi should turn to abusing them.

We wonder if such specific instances will ever vanish as long as the general low regard continues for the sanctity of life and for the rights of every single human being. Otherwise the International Year of the Child has come to naught.

King Holiday

Disappointment: The House of Representatives rejected a bill to establish Jan. 15, the anniversary of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a national holiday. The bill received a 252-133 majority vote, less than the two thirds required.

The main reason given is that it would cost too much. Does anyone really buy that?

We urge that the bill be resubmitted. Dr. King already is a national hero to this country's blacks and to many other Americans. It is high time that the rest acknowledge this reality.

We say "high time" because it is becoming increasingly felt that the black civil rights movement in this nation is flagging, that such low-life organizations as the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis are becoming more active. Recognizing Dr. King would be a needed antidote for such sickness.

and Opinions

Draft Supported

Editor:

It was very depressing to read in your Oct. 31 issue the results of the survey of Aquinas students regarding the draft. Five of these eight young men believe that in a democracy no one should be made to go to war.

People in a democracy elect their leaders and all must abide by the will of the majority as expressed by these leaders. It does not mean anyone can do what he wishes. This would be anarchy. It is sad that these young men so completely misunderstand the meaning of a democracy.

Defense is the duty of every able-bodied man. Training for this duty is best given in the young manhood years before most young men are deep into marital and vocational responsibilities, and when they are physically able.

By the time the next war starts, it will be too late to begin training millions of men. The peacetime draft would furnish a vast reservoir of trained men and help make men of our many soft, pampered youth.

A few years ago, college "men" openly stated they would not even fight to defend themselves. When our implacable foe — the U.S.S.R. — determines that the spirit, or lack of spirit, shown by those collegians and these young men in your survey represents the national feeling, the war will begin, unless we knuckle under first.

John F. Starkweather
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Mary's Unique Role

Editor:

According to Shirley Shannon (Courier-Journal Nov. 7), Mary was ordained, for in her argument "it is the function of the priesthood to bring God to man and man to God." With this simplistic argument, Mary's unique role as Mother becomes lost. She was the Mother of Jesus, Mother of the Church, and as the new Eve, becomes the Mother of us all.

If we truly love her, we will listen to her. What was said at Cana was said for our instruction also: "Do whatever He tells you." (John 2). And He has spoken. We owe him our obedience. As loving children instructed by a most holy father, we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

But it is hard to be a child, to be meek and humble. We don't succeed too often. There are some who did become as little children. Just a few minutes of reflection brings to mind Mother Seton, Mother Cabrini, the Sisters of Charity, Mother Teresa, Francis of Assisi, the Trappists and the Carmelites, and above all, the silent witness of Mary. They did not seek the ministerial priesthood, yet they answered God's call to service. They did, however, have one thing in common. They believed that the Holy Spirit was guiding them when they were in obedience to the Holy Father and those bishops in union with him. Mother Seton: "Be loyal daughters of the Church." And as Mother Teresa put it so beautifully: "There is no confusion in the Church. The Church is Christ." As He picked the apostles with Peter as the head of the Church, so today He gives

us John Paul II, the successor of Peter. Why don't we listen to him?

Mrs. Joan M. Rand
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Keep Only Male Priests

Editor:

If it please you, I, a Protestant and not an antagonist, would like to make comment on the woman-priest debate.

I believe, if the Mass is patterned after Jewish worship of sinners presenting an offering to God, with priests as mediators, then men only must be priests.

By command of God to Moses, these priests were sons of Aaron. This excluded even some men of Israel. Some who offered incense contrary to God's command were smitten.

If the Mass is patterned after this type of worship, then keep true to the pattern.

Steve McManus
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Morality Lagging

Editor:

In the course of time men have made great strides in the world of knowledge and science but they have evolved into a race of super-minds with very little moral integrity. The search for knowledge and acclaim has bypassed the moral and natural law. We have come to believe that all that results in an apparent good is morally acceptable. An article in a recent Democrat and Chronicle cited that use of fetal tissue obtained from aborted fetuses has proved to be potentially successful in laboratory experimentation of skin-grafting compared with the methods now in use.

When an inhuman action can result in an apparent aid to humankind we immediately think of the end result as superseding the former action — the end justifies the means.

Our Holy Father has already stated that abortion is morally unacceptable. He

also spoke of the lack of respect for human life as the foremost evil of our day.

True, we can donate our eyes or any other organ that may benefit another but that is done only with the consent of the person involved or their guardian — that is their inalienable right. On the contrary, to use the organ of skin from an aborted fetus is overstepping the rights of that individual unable to speak for itself. Abortion is denying the right to a fully human life of an individual yet to be born. Experimentation and use of fetal organs is but another God-given right denied.

Mrs. Robert Leahy
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Nativity Stamps

Editor:

Would it not be good for Courier-Journal readers to use the Madonna and Child Christmas stamp?

There has been so much opposition to the use of a religious stamp in past years

that this year's, commemorating the Nativity should be used widely by Christians. It does seem to tie in with the Church's mission of evangelization.

Mrs. James Lucey
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Offered Free: A Calendar In Braille

Editor:

It is time for us to offer our free 1980 Braille calendar to the blind. This calendar presents the Church feasts and acts as a companion to the Sunday Mass Propers in Braille.

As always, we are most grateful to you for publishing our announcements. You will never fully realize how many visually impaired persons you and your readers have helped throughout the years! Requests for the calendar and information on other free services should be addressed to Xavier Society for the Blind, 154 East 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010.

Betty J. Dodd,
Public Relations

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. 32 December 5, 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: Richard Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. (716) 454-7050. Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

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"FOR A LONG TIME I THOUGHT I WASN'T GOING TO MAKE IT."