

Editorials

Had to Lose

We, being a weekly, will not be able to keep up with whatever unlikely turns the world of college basketball may take nightly but it seems obvious to us that there was no way Notre Dame could lose to DePaul last week. After all, what chance could a bunch of Blue Demons have against Our Lady?

And while the wonderful world of sports always leads to such outlandish headlines as St. Francis thrashes St. James, some of the nicknames chosen for teams leave us wondering.

How on earth did a Catholic college, such as DePaul, ever choose to name their sports teams after demons? And the world of sports abounds with such sobriquets: We have Sun Devils, Red Devils, Blue Devils, demons in various hues, etc., etc.

What is so alluring about the devil that makes colleges adopt his name?

Perhaps we have extra reason to root for such heavenly standbys as the California Angels and the New Orleans Saints.

Merciful Hands

A recent proposal by Nevada Atty. Gen. Richard Bryan brings to mind the execution some 25 years ago of Barbara Graham in the gas chamber.

During "rehearsal" of her execution, a prison official explained to her how to die comfortably. When you hear the cyanide pellets plop into the acid, he explained, hold your breath, count to 10, then breath deeply. That way, he said, it won't be so painful.

"How the hell do you know?" shot back the victim-to-be.

A subsequent book raised serious doubt concerning

her guilt — she had maintained her innocence throughout the trial and its aftermath.

Now, Bryan is proposing that the state shut down its gas chamber and administer the death penalty through lethal injections.

"I don't think death should be prolonged unnecessary agony," said the state's high executioner. "Injections are considered a quick, relatively painless form of execution..."

We shall avoid the obvious by not repeating Barbara Graham's question.

According to Religious News Service, medical experts say that death by injection is "virtually" instantaneous. The prisoner would feel nothing other than drowsiness. The death certificate would then carry the official cause as "coronary death." We think it only fair that it also include something like "induced at the merciful hands of the state" to give credit where it's due.

And Opinions

No Medical Reasons For Abortion

Editor:

The recent decision to allow Medicaid abortion has to be one of the most tragic actions since the Supreme Court decision of Jan. 22, 1973, to allow abortion on demand.

First, abortions are rarely, if ever, "medically necessary." This would be held by doctors on either side of the abortion issue. The late Dr. Allan Gutmacher, former head of Planned Parenthood, stated: "Today it is possible, for almost any patient to be brought through pregnancy alive, unless she suffers from a fatal illness such as cancer or leukemia and, if so, abortion would unlikely prolong, much less, save life." Dr. Heffron of Tufts Medical School many years ago stated: "Anyone who performs a therapeutic abortion is either ignorant of modern methods of treating complications of pregnancy or is unwilling to take the time to use them." Daniel Callahan (who would permit abortion) in his very extensively researched book on abortion concludes: "I was able to discover in the current abortion literature only one sustained agreement that medical indications for abortions, strictly taken, still constitute a major occasion for abortions... one can safely say that medical indications are increasingly nonexistent."

The point is that abortion is not "medically necessary." The reason abortion is supported for the poor is that what is available to the rich should be available to the poor. The problem with this is that the premise is wrong. Abortion is seen by some of the wealthy as a good thing and so should be available to the poor. The difficulty with this is that you do not help the poor by killing the children of the poor. If we were back in the 1860s we would find that only the rich could afford slaves. Would those supporting abortion for the poor also want to see the poor given money so they could afford slaves? I doubt it because of the immorality of slavery. So, too, I don't see abortion as helping the poor but only trying to aid the poor to kill their own, which they have resisted more than any group. (It is interesting to note in the polls that blacks, for example, are three times stronger in opposing abortion than even Catholics.)

If those who are really "pro-choice" want to help the poor, they should work toward eliminating the conditions that force the poor into poverty, so they can have a real choice. Let the use of the money (67 million) for Medicaid abortions be decided by the poor themselves. If the money could be designated for health care, jobs, housing, education, day care, food or abortion, which area would the poor choose. Certainly not for abortion. Besides, the money going for Medicaid abortions does not go to the poor but to doctors and clinics who become wealthy off the physical and psychological suffering the poor will experience from undergoing abortions.

Those who are poor are this way simply because they are powerless, dependent and unwanted. There is no one more this way than the unborn child today. They, too, are discriminated against because of their size and where they live. The poor, more than anyone else, can understand the unborn's plight. It is unfortunate that poor women (and their unborn children) have become the battleground in the abortion issue.

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Editor:

Regarding the Medicaid abortion issue: Many studies as well as doctors on both sides overwhelmingly agree that abortion is rarely if ever medically necessary.

Abortion is not medical treatment unless you call pregnancy a disease as some would. If you took the aborted fetus to the pathology lab you would discover nothing wrong with the fetus. In other words, there is a big difference between elective and non-elective surgery. Abortion is clearly a medical technique. We don't pay for a person's nose or other plastic surgery like that, so why should we be forced to pay for elective abortions? We don't put a person unnecessarily on a respirator or perform surgery on them (let alone pay for it) just because they request!

There are certain rights guaranteed by the Constitution which we call non-

interference rights such as the right to bear arms or the right to travel. We can't interfere with that right but it doesn't mean that I am obligated to support it by paying for someone's handgun or paying for a person's airline ticket to California. In the same way, abortion unfortunately has been established as a non-interference right, until we pass a Human Life amendment, but it does not mean that we as citizens have to support that right, a right we find immoral.

For so long women supporting abortion were maintaining that it is a decision between a woman and her doctor, and society has no say in that decision. Now they are proposing that society should have a say by supporting abortion. It seems there is a real hypocrisy that they want the decision one way and they say they want it the other way. Which is the basis for their decision?

Society does have an investment in their decision now more than ever. I hope people will feel outraged by the decision of the Supreme Court to not only allow abortion but to now make citizens pay for something which is immoral and repugnant — the killing of innocent human life.

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Nestle Defended

Editor:

By this time, many are aware that there is an international movement to boycott all products of the Nestle Company, to compel the company to discontinue the marketing of infant food formulas to the Third World countries. As a physician, I decided to consider the charges and wish to make the following points:

1. The boycott claims that, since supplementary feedings must be used with native water which is frequently polluted, the infant nourished solely on breast milk will avoid being contaminated. This is false. With polluted water in the environment for washing the baby, other family members, clothing and utensils, not to mention culturally poor personal hygiene, it would be impossible to prevent the infant's being infected even with no other food intake than breast milk.

2. The boycott claims that native mothers use a one-day's

supply of formula and dilute it to excess using it over a week or so, thus starving the baby. So far as I could determine, only one such case has been reported. Even if there were more, should a nutritious food additive be eliminated from the market for this reason? These are not unintelligent people. They are not stupid, they are uneducated. Surely, education is the answer, not deprivation.

3. The boycott claims that improper advertising by Nestle recommends dietary supplements as a superior substitute for breast milk. If this were ever the case, the fact is that at the present time, all Nestle advertising carries the statement, "Breast Milk is Best." As it certainly is for the first three months. Beyond three months probably and beyond six months certainly, the infant's diet must be enriched, and these dietary supplements are far more nutritious and sanitary than the soil-contaminated cereal gruels usually available.

4. There is no question but that eliminating infant formulas from general use will cause more infant deaths and morbidity than continuing them.

5. My statements above are simply factual and less emotional than the material published by INFACT, the infant formula action coalition but will influence very few of those on the list of supporters of the boycott. Which should make it very obvious that the chief objective of the boycott is not to save lives but to attack multinational corporations directly and the American system of free enterprise indirectly. The supporters of the boycott derive such pleasure from this that they easily rationalize their illogical conclusions.

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Must Oppose Militarism

Editor:

The Church has maintained for centuries that Catholics should fight only in just wars. In light of the nature of modern war, Vatican II has declared that "any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation."

This declaration, in effect,

ends the just war option, for all modern war involves such acts.

In the midst of the debates concerning registration and the draft, we, if we genuinely wish to follow the teachings of our Church — and Christ — should not be arguing the efficacy of the draft; we should be utterly opposed to it and to any other manifestation of militarism.

Christ said, "Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword." This Lent, let us remember how He died.

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Birthingright's New Office

Editor:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Birthingright of Rochester and the dedicated volunteer women who counsel and advise women on the alternatives to abortion, we thank all who participated in last Fall's Respect Life Sunday collection.

Participation in that collection, as well as the 1978 collection, along with generous and loyal support of many individuals in our community, has enabled Birthingright to expand its services by establishing a second office. We now have an office on the Westside, in the city, telephone number 328-8700. And our new office is in the Brighton-Pittsford



"I KNOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GIVE EVEN IF IT HURTS A LITTLE, BUT YOU'RE TURNING BLACK AND BLUE!"

area, on the Eastside, telephone number 385-2529. Through the generous support of many people in this diocese, Birthingright is able to help a growing number of anxious expectant women make the choice for life.

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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.