

Editorials

Courting Trouble

The Supreme Court in its continued disregard for the rights of the unborn may be creating a threat to one of the most basic aspects of our government, the system of checks and balances.

The Founding Fathers, to ensure that no one branch of government — executive, legislative and judicial — can gain superior authority, set up a system to keep this from occurring.

Thus, the executive, in this case the president, has the power of appointment, with the consent of the Senate, to the judicial's highest branch, the Supreme Court. The Congress can make laws and pass a constitutional amendment overturning a Supreme Court ruling. The court can declare unconstitutional

laws passed by the Congress, judge executive programs, etc., etc.

Americans rightfully cherish this system. But the ongoing abuse of the unborn and the disregard for the many involved in the pro-life movement have created festering distrust of the nation's highest court in many corners.

Increasingly there is talk of establishing a way whereby Supreme Court justices, who are appointed for life, can be replaced, perhaps on a regular basis, by election. The idea of regularly induced fresh air into the nation's highest legal chamber is catching on. Such sentiment, of course, goes directly to the heart of the Constitution itself and requires long and serious consideration.

But that is not the point here. What is worrisome is that the present set of justices, by consistently disregarding the rights of unborn citizens, are fostering serious doubt as to the court's sense of justice. Many feel it is running roughshod over the will of the

Congress and perhaps the executive, thus itself upsetting the system of checks and balances.

Its most recent adjudication in this regard was to uphold a Brooklyn District Court's ruling that payments for Medicaid abortions should be made until a final ruling in the constitutionality of the matter is rendered. And who will make that decision? The very same Supreme Court.

Regarding the District Court ruling, Father Edward Bryce, executive director of the NCCB office for Pro-Life Activities, said it "elevated abortion to the status of a preferred constitutional right" and this is "a frightening and mischievous notion." He said Judge John J. Dooling's "consideration of abortion as medically necessary would be ludicrous, given the state of the medical arts in 1980, except for the broad definition of health that he employs. His concern for 'each individual's freedom' refuses to embrace the freedom of the abortion victim."

This, obviously; is no little thing.

And the continued hopelessness many feel about the nation's highest court also is no little thing.

And Opinions

Abortion ABCs

Editor:

A, B and C are neighbors. A is persisting in murdering Cs. And A further announces the intention of continuing the campaign against Cs.

B, as is everyone else, is aware of the situation. Can B continue to socialize with A and maintain that such has nothing to do with A's treatment of Cs because B does not really approve of that?

We think not.

And though obviously an oversimplification, we think the logic applies to our situation in relation to the pro-abortionists and the unborn.

How can we, in good conscience, socialize with pro-abortionists in their home while they are busy promoting the brutalization of the unborn?

How can our priests and laity sit down at ecumenical dinners with avowed pro-abortion church leaders? How can they share communion at ecumenical services?

We feel that Catholics who participate in such events are either ignoring or condoning open brutality and disregard for God's law.

Richard and Elizabeth Shipley
11 Mumford St.
Seneca Falls, N.Y. 13148

Dislikes Our Coverage

Editor:

When is an open meeting not an open meeting?

The answer is when Bishop Matthew Clark closes his town meeting at St. Casimir's in Elmira to a member of a black charismatic group at the moment when she is making a plea for conciliation for Mt. Saviour Monastery.

Such a striking reversal of avowed purpose and procedure occurred during a recent bishop's visit in the Southern Tier. It was carefully excluded in Martin Toombs' Courier-Journal story. This exclusion, or type of censorship, so characteristic of the Catholic press in general, comes as no great surprise, yet with much

dismay, because it is what your readers are conditioned to expect concerning news of people and events which bear even the slightest touch of controversy.

What such exclusion did for the credibility of the Catholic press among the five hundred who witnessed the event is another question.

Of still graver consequence is little did the audience realize that the bishop, to his credit, made his second reversal of the evening at the conclusion of the regular meeting and did call a meeting with the woman and others to hear the issue. Sadly, your paper made no one wiser to this fact.

It is difficult for anyone to believe that the Catholic press has to take a back seat to the secular press in professional expertise and sensitivity in handling controversial issues. Does it really serve the cause of truth, charity and justice when important persons and events are relegated to a nether world, a world of non-being, as in totalitarian lands?

The secular press, in a democracy, is ever vigilant with regard to institutional injustice. Can Catholics expect our own institutions to be sacrosanct, immune from similar scrutiny and accountability? How soon may readers of our diocesan weekly expect at least the minimum standards of an objective news reporting to which we are accustomed in our daily newspaper?

J. Francis Carver
Mill Hill
Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886

Editor's Note: The hap-pening reader Carver refers to involved a personnel matter at Mt. Saviour Monastery. It was not discussed at the meeting because Bishop Clark considered it a private matter. He met those who were concerned later. To keep the record straight, although one of those at the meeting was black, it was not a racial matter. In his article, Martin Toombs covered questions concerning what some felt was inadequate funding by the diocese of schools, protests of diocesan school mandates, and matters concerning the divorced and separated, the role of the lay ministry, the shortage of priests. Though some of these matters may contain controversial matters, we reported on them because they were news. Much news coverage does involve judgment. And it should be noted that controversy in itself is not necessarily newsworthy.

Father Rogers Birthday

Editor:

I am unofficially taking the responsibility of sending official birthday greetings to Father Foster Rogers. He was associate pastor at Assumption for 50 months and always so kind and thoughtful to others on their "special" days.

To age is no crime,
So we've been told
Fr. Rogers is not guilty,
But will be 40 years old.

He's been on this earth
For 2/5 of a century,
He's now at St. Alphonsus
in Auburn,
Near the penitentiary.

He's no longer in Fairport
Where we can sing his
praise,
But we hope he grows old
gracefully
And remains "child-like" in
his ways.

So, Happy Birthday, Father
Rogers,
Try not to be blue,
Tomorrow's the day
That life begins for you.

Mary Lou Stolz
Assumption Parish
Fairport, N.Y.

Our Lady Of Guadalupe

Editor:

There seems to be a spiritual famine in the world more debilitating than any physical hunger. One of the

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.

proofs of this is an apathy toward one of the greatest gifts given to mankind — the image of our Blessed Mother — given in 1531 through an Aztec Indian named Juan Diego.

Only 1 percent of the Catholic population seems to know about this great gift to the whole world. God has not done this for any other nation. Why isn't more being done to spread this knowledge to all peoples? Why isn't veneration of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe being done?

Mary Kelly
7 Harwood Lane
East Rochester, N.Y. 14445

Criticism Irresponsible

Editor:

I would like to respond to the letter by C.A. Irwin in the Feb. 27 Courier-Journal.

I don't know how children are prepared for First Communion and Confirmation today because my youngest is 19 and my oldest is 27. I do remember, however, when they were getting ready to receive the Sacraments, my husband and I spent a great deal of time making sure they knew everything they were supposed to know.



"DO YOU WANT TO SIT IN THE PRAYING OR NON-PRAYING SECTION?"

Are you expecting a handful of dedicated volunteers to teach your children what they should be learning at home?

I have a son attending Becket Hall Seminary and I see no evidence that priests are being turned out on an assembly line basis. These young men work hard and

spend many long hours preparing for their vocation.

I think you have done a disservice to the entire Becket and St. Bernard's Community with your irresponsible criticism.

Ann L. Wood
One Terrace Drive
Apalachin, N.Y. 13732

Fr. Louis J. Hohman

The Open Window



On the Virgin Birth, Matthew Is Explicit

Dear Father Hohman,

You've written a few excellent columns about sexist language in the Mass. Here is something along the same line that has troubled me for quite a while.

The Messiah was supposed to be of the house of David. Indeed, Matthew gives the genealogy from David to Joseph. But, if it truly was a virgin birth, what difference could it possibly make whether or not Joseph was descended from David? Surely Mary is the one who should have had her genealogy given.

Does this mean that the

people of the times, the people for whom the gospel was written, did not believe in the virgin birth? Was it a later addition?

(Signed) S.B.

Dear S.B.,

The answer to your question is contained in the Israelite understanding of genealogy. Their starting point was that no female at all would be a part of a genealogy; that is, mentioned as a person in the direct line. They were often mentioned in the listings but not as the primary descendant or ancestor. So Ruth and Rahab were mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus but only secondarily to their husbands. It is also true that Israelite genealogies very often included men who were not

the biological fathers of the people who descended from them. There was a law, for example, called the Levitic Law which provided that if a man died without a male child, his brother would take the widow as his wife and then if they had a male child it would receive the name of the dead brother. What I am trying to get at is this genealogy of Jesus, even though it comes through Joseph, is a legal one at least in the sense that he is the legal descendant of David, son of David. It is also a matter of tradition that Mary herself was of the house and family of David, so even if these facts were not verifiable Jesus would still be by blood a member of the house and family of David. The virgin birth is very explicitly indicated in the Gospel of Matthew. (Matthew 1:20; 23; 25. Luke 1:27, 34, 35.)

In conclusion I might indicate that there have been commentators, scriptural scholars, who believe that the genealogy as presented, by Luke was actually the genealogy of Mary. However this is not really provable.

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