

Editorials

Supporting Death

The Senate of the State of New York in the year of our Lord 1980 has chosen death as a way to correct societal ills. By a 42-14 vote, the senators have turned back to capital punishment by overriding Gov. Hugh Carey's veto of the death penalty.

The senators of New York State took such action when they know there is no evidence that punishment is a deterrent to murder.

The leader of their rush to execution is Sen. Dale Volker of Erie County who gave as a reason for his sentiment: "Nothing we have done has stemmed the tide of murder and violent crime."

Sen. Volker does not mention the fact that capital punishment has been tried through the ages and has never been a deterrent either. He knows that the job of cleansing society of violent crime must be done by attacking the causes, not the results.

The senator is further quoted by the Associated Press: "I spent a number of years out on those streets. I was one of those cops being shot at."

The senator is fortunate that he is still not "out on those streets." He has left many, many people out there — impoverished, jobless, ostracized. The people against whom, his rather melodramatic phrase would indicate, he has taken an adversary role — past and present.

"We will save lives if we pass this," the senator oversimplifies. He knows neither he nor anyone else can back up that statement factually.

There are many others who believe otherwise.

District Attorney Mario Merola of the Bronx: "I don't think the death penalty will be effective as a deterrent."

District Attorney Denis Dillon of Nassau County: "From my experience, jurors are reluctant to convict when there is a death penalty. If you poll prospective jurors 70 percent are for the death penalty. But when they sit on a jury, they really scrutinize a case."

Herbert J. Sturz, New York City deputy mayor for criminal justice: "A great, great majority of homicides are committed by people who when they wake up in the morning don't know they are going to commit a murder."

In other words, the threat of capital punishment has little bearing.

These men are professionals in the field. But if anyone requires moral persuasion, the bishops of the United States have stated: "The U.S. Catholic Conference goes on record in opposition to capital punishment."

And the bishops of the State of New York have stated that opposition to the death penalty is "rooted in the basic Christian value of respect for human life." The state's bishops supported the U.S. Catholic Conference with the reminder that it was affirmed "by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace."

Let us remember that the mental progenitors of today's death-seekers executed the Prince of Peace and the first pope, among thousands of other innocents.

Albany insiders feel that the Assembly will not override the veto.

"But the issue is to continue to oppose the death penalty no matter what happens this year."

All pro-life advocates must take up this banner.

and Opinions

Re That Tree Named Berenice

Editor:

As a student of Church History, I would like to explain the name of the tree mentioned in your column "Looking Back" 75 years. (Courier-Journal, May 14, 1980, p. 23)

The tree planted in 1905, was named Berenice in honor of the titular see of the coadjutor bishop, Thomas F. Hickey (1861-1940), Second Bishop of Rochester, not related to Bishop Dennis Hickey.

To quote from Father Robert McNamara's book, "The Diocese of Rochester 1868-1968": "Hickey was appointed to the titular see of Berenice on January 18, 1905, and assigned to Bishop McQuaid as coadjutor with right of succession." (p. 226)

A "titular see" is a diocese that no longer exists, used in a title only. It is often a place located "in partibus infidelibus," i.e., "in the regions of the infidels." Since every bishop must have a "diocese" some are given a titular one, such as Archbishop Sheen, the uninhabited island of Newport off the coast of England, given to him as a title of honor on retirement. Bishop Kearney, who was named titular bishop of Tabacara in Mauretania, remarked that he would "end up as a sheik" (McNamara, p. 520).

This explains the strange name given to a tree; now a question for you to answer: Does the tree still stand at Holy Rosary?

Rev. John F. Gagnier, Assistant Pastor, St. John the Evangelist, 2400 W. Ridge Rd. Greece, N.Y. 14626

Prayer is the Necessary Glue

Editor:

Jesus calls us by name. To each person He says, "Come follow me to my Father." I know He has called me; I know He has called you. When we hear His call and answer Him; we attempt to walk in His footsteps.

Jesus' work is to sanctify this world. Our work as we follow Him is to allow Jesus to work through us. We can bring Jesus into wherever we are, into whatever we do. Through us, Jesus can continue His work in sanctifying the place we are in. I have a place to be and a job to do. By being in the place Jesus asks me to be in, by doing those things Jesus asks me to do in the way He wants them done, I allow Jesus to work and sanctify my part of this world.

to the ministers of the Church to set hearts afire and transform them with the love of Christ. "I have come to light a fire on the earth. How I wish the blaze were ignited." (Lk. 12:49)

Thirdly, power to understand the message and boldness to proclaim it. Thus, "all were filled with the Holy Spirit." Filled with the Holy Spirit to signify that His coming is more than an assist from the outside, like lending a hand or pushing a stalled car. Rather, it is an assist from within — turning on lights so that the mind can "see," understand the good news; creating lion hearts to proclaim it.

Lastly, power to proclaim the good news to all the world. To suggest the worldwide mission of the Church, St. Luke used the expression "foreign tongues." "They began to express themselves in foreign tongues" — very probably, "prayer tongues." Luke, however, used "foreign tongues" for a theme dear to his heart was that the gospel be preached to nations of every tongue.

Witnessing essentially is not just living the faith; it is talking about it. That is what the apostles did: they talked about their faith in the risen Christ; they lived it; and eventually they died for it, giving the highest witness — martyrdom! They did this through the Holy Spirit. We can do the same, for the Holy Spirit has also been poured out on us!

When a boss wants to let his people know what his plans are or how he wants things done, he calls a meeting. When he wants to know how an employee is making out or what that person is thinking, he calls a meeting. It is very important for the wellbeing of the business that meetings take place.

When a husband and wife want to discuss their family or personal concerns, they talk together. When they want to share their thinking with the children or understand the child's point of view, they talk together. It is important to the wellbeing of the family for them to communicate together.

When a person in love wants to tell his beloved of his love, he expresses that love in words, or cards, or gifts, or actions. Love needs to be expressed somehow or it dies.

Jesus is Lord to me. He is my boss, family, bridegroom, beloved, lover. There must be communication between Jesus and me. The more meetings, talking, sharing, loving between us, the better our relationship will be. The better our relationship is, the better Jesus can work through me. The more love we share, the more of Jesus' love I can give another.

All of this is called prayer. Any follower of Jesus is called to a complete, constant life of prayer. It is the necessary glue in the Jesus-person relationship. The more prayer, the more constant the sharing, the better relationship, and the more what I do is truly Jesus working.

Joyce White, 973 Pear Tree Lane, Webster, N.Y. 14580

Thanks for Help!

Editor:

Thank you for your help in publishing the Red Cross Community Blood Drive at Holy Cross Parish. Twenty-six units of blood were collected during the drive: a substantial showing, since this was the first Blood Drive held at Holy Cross in recent years.

It is my hope that a Community Blood Drive will become an annual service project in Holy Cross Parish.

Joanne Fisher, Publicity

Guard of Honor

Editor:

Even before the visit of Pope John Paul II to Marian shrines in Poland, Ireland and Mexico, an increase in devotion to Mary was becoming apparent. A remembering people had turned to her again, sometimes through favorite devotions, other times seeking new prayer forms for today's world.

One devotion approved by the Holy See that your readers may be interested in is the Guard Hour, an hour dedicated daily to Mary. The time need not necessarily be spent in prayer, but may be as simple as offering one hour of the day's ordinary activities to Mary.

For more information, please write to Our Lady's Guard of Honor, 135 West 31st St., New York, N.Y. 10001.

Rev. Cassian A. Miles, OFM, 135 West 31st St, New York, N.Y. 10001

Help Maintain Program

Editor:

In a letter about Governor Carey's cancellation of the Summer School Program at Attica Prison, Senator Fred Warder writes, "the Governor has maintained his position on reducing funding for this program. The whole correction budget was reduced and the first things to go were

the specialized programs." These are the programs that help in rehabilitation and help to make an inhuman condition a little bit more human.

Do we want to save a comparatively few thousand dollars and risk another Attica, 1971? Risk human lives and millions of dollars?

Will you begrudge a few minutes for writing a letter which may in the long run help a person to change his life?

Adolphe and Loe d'Audiffret, RR 2, Naples, N.Y. 14512

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.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

What Happened On the Feast Of Pentecost

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 20:19-23. (R1) Acts 2:1-11. (R2) 1 Cor. 12:3-7, 12-13.

The Jewish Feast of Pentecost was celebrated for two reasons: to commemorate the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, and to give thanks for the spring harvest.

Pentecost means "the 50th," because it was celebrated on the 50th day after the Passover. The Passover generally fell in the middle of April. Pentecost fell around the beginning of June. Since traveling conditions were better then, the Feast of Pentecost usually attracted more people. This accounts for the international character of the nations listed by St. Luke: "Parthians and Medes, Elamites," etc.

Since work was forbidden on this day, there was a distinct holiday flavor about the Feast and larger crowds than usual thronged the streets.

On this Jewish Feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down upon the Church. Four things happened: wind, fire, infilling with the Holy Spirit, and "foreign tongues."

The Pentecost event meant first that God was present in the Church and in every member of the Church then in the Upper Room.

Secondly, the four happenings showed why God had become present to give His Church power to fulfill her mission; namely, to witness to Jesus to the four ends of the earth. To do this, four things are necessary.

First, power to sweep away all opposition. This was signified by the "noise like a strong, driving wind." "O Wild West Wind," wrote Shelley, "destroyer and preserver. Be thou, spirit fierce, my spirit!"

Secondly, power to proclaim the Word effectively. This was symbolized by the "tongues as of fire." The tongue is the instrument of speech; and fire is an element that transforms everything it touches into itself. The Spirit, in a word, gave power



SEE IF YOU CAN SKATE THEM OVER TO THE CHURCH FOR CONFESSION.