

Editorials

New Genocide

Planned Parenthood has been a legitimate target of criticism for its increasing involvement in abortion as a means of birth control. Naturally, most of the fire has come from pro-life groups.

PP also bared an unsavory bias some time back when it published a cartoon showing a Catholic bishop carrying gasoline at a time when a series of fires damaged abortion clinics.

And now, the Rabbinical Alliance of America, an Orthodox Jewish organization, has, through its president, declared that it feels any form of family planning is a threat to the existence of the Jewish people. According to Religious News Service, Rabbi Abraham Hecht said that "young couples entering the mainstream of Jewish life should consider perpetuating the people of the nation of Abraham. The only way to do this is by having large families, especially in view of the Holocaust, which destroyed over one million children."

Pro-lifers and others have been concerned about the new holocaust which has snuffed out the lives of millions of Americans in recent years. History has castigated those who looked the other way during the

genocide of the 30s and 40s. If the history of the present day survives to future readers, it very well could condemn those who were supportive of or apathetic about the present obliteration of the innocents.

Another brief look at Rabbi Hecht's viewpoint — In nearly 2,000 years of our dispersion, Jews managed to produce healthy, strong families and Judaism survived. But in view of the high rate of intermarriage and the natural diminishment of our people because of death and the tragedy of abortion, which affects so many young couples, we begin to fear whether there will be a tomorrow for the Jewish people since its present status, population-wise, is in such a state of flux.

Of course, the rabbi is addressing a particular problem of a particular segment of people. There can be little argument that overpopulation, or at least the world's perspective of it and its mishandling of food distribution, is a major problem. The Vatican has called for imaginative and moral methods of birth control and has endorsed Natural Family Planning as one approach.

But the thing to be noted about Rabbi Hecht's remarks is that he pinpointed the "tragedy of abortion" as a means of family planning. More and more, those favoring life, for various reasons, are speaking up and, from the tone of political platforms and candidates, are being heard.

And while the alliance, which has 500 Orthodox rabbis as members, did not mention Planned Parenthood by name, there can be little doubt that that organization will feel the heat.

Bouquet!

Talk about compliments! Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity have been accorded a whopper from West Bengal State, which includes Calcutta, her headquarters.

While such reputable and honorable organizations as CARE and Oxfam were among foreign-aided charitable agencies banned from sponsoring new welfare programs because of alleged links with separatist movements in the tribal areas, the state said no such proscription applies to Mother Teresa.

Jyoti Sasu, West Bengal State chief minister, said that Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity "are above reproach and have not been asked to wind up their welfare activities."

And, according to Religious News Service, India's federal post office has issued a special postage stamp to mark Mother Teresa's 70th birthday "in recognition of her work among the poorest and orphans of India."

and Opinions

Refugees Upset Her

Editor:

In the article on Father Gerard Jean-Juste, director of the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, he describes the appalling conditions of the camp. But nowhere does he mention that the Haitians are doing anything to better conditions.

The filth they are living in is man-made, by them. What is to prevent them from the same ground policing that the military impose on their installations?

These people came here for "freedom." Freedom entails responsibility. Freedom to clean up, to cut the grass and to do any of the other jobs necessary to improve the life they came to enjoy.

The European immigrants soon found out the streets of the New World were not paved with gold. These people found freedom in working at low-paying jobs, going to night school after 10 hours work, learning a new language to better themselves. There was no government to clothe, educate them, to take care of their every need.

Let's give the Haitians and Cubans the same opportunity, the same freedom. Let's stop bleeding for those who make no effort to help themselves. If they cannot keep their own surroundings sanitary, just what kind of citizens and neighbors will they become? Will they turn every neighborhood in which they live into a slum? Will they expect our government to continue to support them? If they do not like conditions here, they also have the "freedom" to return to their homeland.

Alice W. Culhane
258 Alphonse St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14621

Chain Novenas Faulted

Editor:

A reaction to the religious upheaval of the 60s is the proliferation of what might be

termed "chain novenas" — those in which the participant leaves a copied novena in a church, one per day. Eventually others join in and the pyramid principle reigns.

It is evil in 1. the fantastic assurances of gaining one's exact request; 2. making the Holy Church vulnerable to ridicule; 3. placing the emphasis on the form rather than the heart of prayer, as if the flesh rather than the spirit has something to offer (St. John 6:63). God is captivated by love not the milieu in which it is made manifest. The effectiveness of prayer rests upon the good pleasure of the Holy Trinity with human cooperation by faith and humble resignation. These well-intentioned, but fanciful minds commit a sin of superstition by expecting a special formula of actions to grant a greater "hearing" of their prayer. "God is not to be coerced as man is, nor is He to be cajoled." (Judith 8:16).

Our intention is not to criticize orthodox devotion. The theology for novenas is provided by Scripture while Holy Mother Church has instituted them. As 10 is symbolic of justice and its implementation, St. Augustine having said, "Law in general is symbolized by the number 10" (De civit. Dei, XV, 20), so 9, short of 10, represents an anticipation of justice.

This hopeful expectation, then, gives us novenas in preparation for Feasts, evolving into commemorations disassociated from particular Feasts; novenas of mourning, looking forward to the deceased's glorification; novenas of petition, which brought about those of thanksgiving; finally, novenas in reparation for injustices (First Fridays of the Sacred Heart).

In the matter of pseudo-novenas, the clergy cannot remain uninvolved. Zealots of the liturgical movement have mouthed private devotions, though "every genuine prayer is prayer of the Church" (Edith Stein). So, too, the easy disregard for votive candles in some churches has forced many to satisfy the natural desire to symbolically leave something of oneself and one's petition before the Tabernacle through chains.

Mention should be made of healthy alternatives to chain novenas. One may attend Mass and commune in conjunction with their novena. Votive glasses and candles for homes are available from many stores (Woolworth's, Wegmans, Trant's). One might contact FMA which sponsors many novenas yearly at FMA, Franciscan Friars, PO Box 598, Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10551. The Carmelite Sisters of West Jefferson Road have the Our Lady of Carmel novena booklet and an occasional Mary candle.

Donald Blais
49 Fallson Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

Wants Capital Punishment

Editor:

A cab driver in Binghamton, two young musicians in New York City, an elderly couple in Central New York. What do these people have in common? They were all victims of murder!

As the list of murder victims and victims of other violent crime increases, the handwringers and opponents of capital punishment continue to make policy in our courts and prison system.

Unfortunately, society is the victim of this turnstile justice.

What helps perpetuate this dangerous situation is the misplaced sympathy of some of our Church and civic leaders. A case in point is Gov. Carey's pardon of two Attica convicts a few years ago. One, after being released, traveled to Brooklyn and murdered two patrolmen.

Nevertheless, Gov. Carey, to this day, persists in his dogmatic position regarding capital punishment.

As I watched on television, the parents of a young man who was recently murdered on a New York City subway platform, I could not help but share their sorrow and outrage.

Why isn't there a death penalty? And why aren't there stiffer sentences and fewer loopholes for violent crime?

Let's vote those bleeding

hearts out of office this November and Novembers to follow.

Robert Bart
PO Box
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Center Seeks Material

Editor:

The Pope John Paul II Center was established at the Orchard Lake Schools, Orchard Lake, Mich., Nov. 15, 1978, as a national center for research on the life, papacy and teachings of Pope John Paul II.

With this in mind, I am using this letter as a means of reaching thousands of Catholics who may wish to contribute any kind of object, picture, article or the like for preservation in the library, archives and museum of the center.

We are especially interested in receiving and preserving the commemorative materials that were issued on the occasion of his election and installation, as well as during his visit to the United States in October 1979.

Father Walter J. Ziembra
Director
Pope John Paul II Center
Orchard Lake, Mich. 48033

Receiving The Host

Editor:

The different changes in the Church liturgy may be good but there is one field we should be careful about, and that is the serving of the sacred Host. Some churches do not have altar boys to catch the Host when it falls to the floor. I heard that at one time the Host dropped to the floor and was picked up by the lay-person and tossed back into the chalice whereas it should have been laid aside.

If a piece of food dropped to the floor you would pick it up and toss it into the trash can, not back on your plate. From now on I'm receiving on the tongue.

James M. Courzer
332 W. Center St.
Elmira, N.Y. 14901

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Double Standard Charged

Dear Father Hohman,

I am writing in regard to your "Open Window" of Sept. 3, "M.M." submitted an interesting letter. Perhaps your reply was a "satisfactory answer" to the writer, but it was not to me.

If, in fact, Frank Sinatra has returned to the "good graces" of the Roman Catholic Church, you offered no explanation as to why an annulment of his first marriage to Nancy was possible. Nor has anyone ever explained how Jacqueline Kennedy could marry Aristotle Onassis with the sanction of the Church, while he had a wife living. And, closer to the home front: how could Sammy Gingello be buried from a Catholic Church? As I understand it, he was divorced. His funeral Mass received as much TV coverage as if he were a national hero.

Once again we are asked to blindly "trust the Church officials" and as a matter of charity, "respect the honesty and integrity of Church officials." I for one am tired of the double standard employed by the Catholic Church.

(Signed) C.S.

Dear C.S.,

There are any number of possibilities explaining the

cause for Sinatra's annulment. It is not Church policy to publicize these reasons even in the case of those who are not famous. Frankly, it is not really any of our business. In the case of Jacqueline Kennedy she simply was not married in the Roman Catholic Church to Aristotle Onassis.

In the case of Sammy Gingello, it behooves us not to sit in judgment on him or anyone else. The TV coverage was not initiated by or sponsored by the Church.

I am concerned principally by your final paragraph. We do not consider that Church officials are trusted blindly. We believe that with very rare exceptions there are men who are devoted to the cause of Jesus Christ and His Church and it is the ordinary and usual thing to trust them just as it is the ordinary and usual thing to trust people of integrity in business and politics. If we are going to get into a situation where we mistrust everyone in every area of public life, then soon we will not have people in public life. The assumption the Catholic Church employs double standards is an incredible piece of rash judgment and without any factual evidence to back it up; and I am sorry that you find yourself thinking that way. It is something you should prayerfully consider and ask such pertinent questions as: Who am I to judge? What evidence do I have for my judgment? I will be praying for you too.

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.