

**Editorials**

**Respect Life**

"All human beings ought to value every person for his or her uniqueness as a creature of God, called to be a brother or sister of Christ by reason of the Incarnation and the universal Redemption. For us, the sacredness of human life is based on these premises. And it is on these same premises that there is based our celebration of life — all human life."

The strong, slightly accented voice was that of Pope John Paul II, speaking from the Mall in Washington, D.C., a year ago. He has repeated the message many times since — that human life must be respected from conception to natural death. He has told us that the Church's Respect Life Program intends "to reiterate its conviction regarding the inviolability of human life in all stages."

Even before the Pope's historic visit to the United States, in fact back in 1972, the Catholic bishops of the United States designated a time each year to be set aside to focus on the sanctity of human life and to consider some of the threats to human dignity.

Now in its ninth year, the Respect Life Program continues to focus on the sanctity of life and the growing number of situations in which human life and dignity are endangered. The program's objectives are 1. to raise the consciousness of American Catholics regarding ways to promote respect for human life, and

2. to motivate people to establish a just social order in which the rights and dignity of every man, woman and child are assured and protected.

In 1975, the bishops adopted the Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities to move toward these ends through education, pastoral care and public policy formation.

What are some of the specific areas for action?

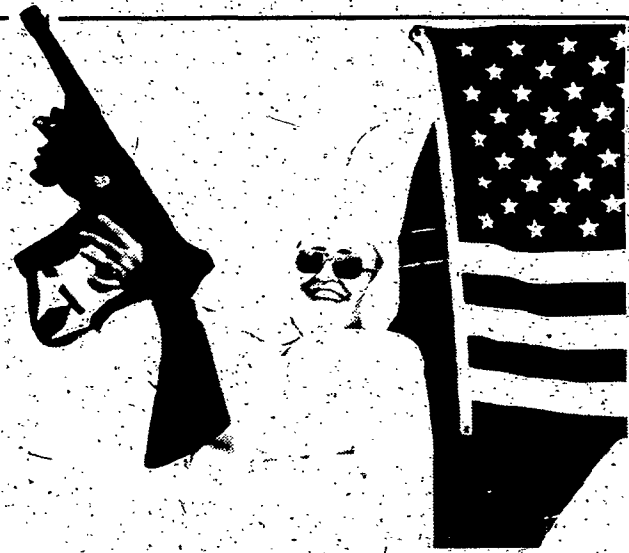
— Since 1973, when the Supreme Court made abortion on demand a national policy, we have seen the destruction of more than 8 million unborn by abortion, over a million destroyed with taxpayers' money.

— To young people who need guidance, love and support, our society offers contraceptives and abortion, afraid to tell them that, even in this society, some people hold certain things to be right and others wrong.

— Handicapped people are often seen as a burden to be eliminated or ignored, rather than as vital members of the community.

— Genetic discoveries, capable of offering much to society and mankind, have been abused when unborn children, found to have genetic diseases, are aborted and new human life is co-joined in the laboratory.

We are fortunate in this diocese to have an active Respect Life Program, under the auspices of the Office of Human Life. The annual collection to support its fine work is scheduled this coming weekend at parishes throughout the diocese.



**Nuff Said**

The sight of this Ku Klux Klanner holding aloft a door prize of a Thompson submachinegun at a recent KKK convention in Antioch, Tenn., is really worth a thousand words 1. against the Klan, and 2. for gun-control. Think about it.

It provides the opportunity for each one of us to stand up and be counted in the battle for life and dignity against the ravages of abortion, euthanasia, genetic manipulation and other signs of disrespect for God's greatest gift.

**and Opinions**

**Blue Cross Gives Thanks**

Editor:

On behalf of the Rochester area Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, I'd like to thank the unsung volunteers who made the Rochester Marathon on Labor Day such a huge success.

Only the runners themselves know what a key role volunteers play in making it possible to complete the 26-mile, 385-yard course, and they uniformly praised the people who expertly manned the hoses and offered refreshment along the route.

The runners also commented on the large turn-out of spectators, whose moral support was decisive in helping many a runner to complete the grueling course. About twice last year's number watched the race.

Of course, we also want to thank the runners for helping us to make a point that is central to the reason for our sponsorship of events like the marathon.

Promoting physical fitness is an important facet in our

overall effort to contain health costs. We are not interested in turning everyone into a competitive athlete, or promoting running per se. Our intent is to stimulate the individual's interest in maintaining optimum by whatever fitness regimen suits his or her lifestyle and proves satisfying.

Donald E. Kneeland  
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**Abortion Condemned**

Editor:

Speaking in Siena this week, Pope John Paul II rebuked those who say they support human rights and yet remain silent on abortion. Unless protection for human life is guaranteed in the womb, said the pontiff, there will never be proper regard for it in other areas of society.

I hope the planners of next year's National Conference of Catholic Charities devote ample time to the issues of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. It would follow,

too, that this group seek a senator or congressman who has championed the rights of the unborn rather than one who has consistently voted to use tax dollars for the destruction of the unborn.

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**Clown Role Criticized**

Editor:

I noticed in your Aug. 27 issue that Rev. Dave Mura had led a 100th year anniversary convention of the Clown, Mime, Puppet and Dance Ministry.

Most clergy today find themselves on the periphery of people's lives. They clown around and goof off with the few who hang around the rectory but they are incapable of asking the laity the tough questions we used to be challenged with. They are at the wrong places at the wrong time. They are puppeting in the courtyard while the political decisions are being made. They are clowning around out of town while the feast is in progress.

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**1980 Years On the Job**

Editor:

New organizations are being formed for the purpose of persuading people to vote for moral men and moral legislation. Seems to me that some persons have joined these new organizations before stopping to think that there is an old organization whose members for 1980 years have enjoyed the privilege and the duty of supporting public and private morality and that without having to buy television time or demonstrate at the Liberty Pole.

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**Fr. John Reedy**

Looking for the Lord



**Tax Exemption And Freedom Of Press**

It's a long way from passage of a bill by the House of Representatives to the President's signing it into law. A measure can disappear into any number of legislative swamps along the way.

Still, I am encouraged by the fact that the House voted (205 to 188) to modify a policy of the Internal Revenue Service which seemed excessive, which smothered some elements of free discussion by less affluent groups.

At issue was an IRS ruling which gave a new and harsh interpretation to a reasonable limitation on the political activity of tax exempt, non-profit organizations.

The ruling said that the publications of such groups could lose the vitally important tax exempt status if they published accurate information on the voting records of public officials on issues of particular interest to the group.

IRS gave a number of examples of similar activity which could jeopardize the tax exemption. The effect was that such journals would have to be constantly listening for the footsteps of the IRS whenever they dealt with the public policies which were of particular interest to their constituencies.

Phillip Crane introduced the House measure, which was passed on Aug. 20. His bill would allow the agency to remove the tax exempt status of an organization for specifically endorsing a candidate, but not for publishing voter information

material or (I believe) for advocacy of particular policies and issues.

In a previous comment, I noted some of the difficulties in arguing against such IRS rulings. Unless congress limits them, these rulings have the force of law until someone takes on the federal government in court. Not many tax exempt organizations have the available resources to undertake such a challenge, when the opposition is being funded by federal taxes.

Also, it's difficult, if not impossible, to learn just how an original ruling originated, who started the ball rolling, what motivations were behind it.

In this instance, there is a very strong impression (which I share) that the original impetus came from some of those nervous legislators who have been feeling the hot breath of right-to-life groups. A number of powerful senators and congressmen have felt their "safe" seats shaking beneath them. Many of these people have been in Washington long enough to know how to stimulate a government agency to action while managing to keep their own influence in the shadows.

Tax exempt status is a privilege; it's perfectly

reasonable for the government to place some limitations on those who would benefit from this privilege.

But when you're placing limitations on a right as basic as that of freedom of the press, the decision should be made out in the open, by legislators, not by the arcane procedures of government agencies.

I have no problem at all with the limitation that tax exempt religious publications should refrain from endorsing or campaigning for particular candidates. I have a lot of problems with a policy which would prevent such organizations from publicly and freely arguing the issues, which would prevent them from reporting and commenting on the public positions of candidates and office holders.

With the consolidation of public information empires, with the blandness of discussion published in periodicals aimed at huge audiences, much of the liveliest of public debate appears in small, special interest periodicals which survive only because of the tax exempt privilege.

These discussions contribute to the public health of our society. Public discourse would be impoverished if such discussion were smothered, if more of these publications are forced out of existence.

I fervently hope that Congressman Crane's bill will survive its journey through the swamps of the legislative process.

And I invite those of you who wish to do so to forward these observations to your senators.

**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.

**Respect Life!**

Human life is precious because it is the gift of a God whose love is infinite.