

Editorials

Tough Decision

In an article written when Bishop Matthew H. Clark was first named to head this diocese and when he was still largely an unknown quantity here, we wrote:

"He is a very decisive man although he may not seem that way at first. He likes to listen to all concerned, think it over, then make his decision. Which he will do."

That has indeed been Bishop Clark's modus operandi in our diocese and this was never more evident than in his monumental decision to close St. Bernard's Seminary.

In his statement on the closing, he said that he had been "immersed in a continuing discussion of the question. I have dialogued with our priests, as well as with the members of the Board and administration at St. Bernard's Seminary, as the issues involved became more critical. Most recently I asked Bishop Dennis W. Hickey to convene a special committee to review the present situation at St. Bernard's and to make recommendations to me."

He listened to all concerned. He thought it over. He made his decision.

No one knows better than Bishop Clark that such acts are not popular in all corners. But when asked at the press conference announcing the closing "just whose decision was this?", the bishop answered clearly and simply, "Mine."

To some the closing may seem precipitous. It was not. It was well-researched, discussed at length with all involved, and the bishop's ultimate decision rests on firm foundation.

It was a courageous decision by Bishop Clark and he matched it with a calm and instructive presence at the press conference. We hope it is needless to say that he deserves the support and affirmation of all diocesans over this issue.

King Holiday?

Nag, nag, nag.

We know that's how we may sound on certain issues, such as our long-time and frequent calls for a national holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We have heard the official reasons why this can't be done — mostly claims that such a holiday presents too much of a financial drain on governmental operations which would be closed. To that we say poppycock.

The need for this nation, which has for so long slighted our black citizens, to honor this deserving champion of human rights far outweighs financial considerations, if indeed any really exist.

Dr. King is honored locally in many ways — most notably the closing of schools in the city, including parochial. But suburban schools do not join in the tribute, thus Catholic schools in such areas also remain open.

A national holiday will erase such confusion. President-elect Ronald Reagan's views concerning racism have been questioned. He has denied that he harbors any such prejudices. His prompt espousal of a national holiday for Dr. King would go a long way toward erasing the notion. We pray that he considers such action.

In the meantime, Christians everywhere should support the idea and work toward that goal on the local scene.

Ugly Prank

Sam Rutigliano, coach of the Cleveland Browns of the National Football League, shows signs of being a coach with a vision wider than an end sweep.

Speaking about the so-called crucial importance of one of his team's games, he said something to the effect that "I try to keep in mind that 800 million people in China don't even know we're playing."

That should be a sobering thought to the many who think the world revolves around whether Earl Campbell should run 20 times or 30 times in a game.

And those connected with sports, we pick on football because it is in vogue right now, should realize that despite the tremendous amount of money connected with their enterprises, that they are still engaged in fun and games.

All of this may be merely prologue to the main point of this editorial.

Recently while training in Florida for one of those earth-stopping football encounters, two members of the Buffalo Bills donned Ku Klux Klan type hoods and "playfully" harassed other members of the team as well as others. We have written on such pranks before — they simply are not funny.

This instance was even uglier because it came at a time when a lunatic — possibly believing in the same rubbish as the KKK — is killing black people in Buffalo and Rochester.

These two pranksters, probably drawing salaries in proportion to their size and ignorance, should be better attuned to community events and spirit than they are. We feel they have committed a monstrous insult to decency which reflects poorly on the Buffalo Bills organization.

and Opinions

Unite for Legislation

Editor:

Although the article, "Will Reagan Act on Tuition Tax Credit?" (C.J. 31 Dec. 80) has many good points, it has one fatal omission and one serious oversight. Father Thomas Reese, SJ, mentions the broken promises of Presidents Nixon and Carter. He fails, however, to mention the essential requirement for a politician to come through on his promises: positive evidence of a constituency that will back him up.

In New York State, after the textbook loan law was passed, Gov. Rockefeller let it be known, through Citizens for Educational Freedom (CEF), that "thank you" letters were urgently needed. When a Protestant minister from Syracuse — well known for his opposition to parents' rights in education — demanded an audience with the Governor to discuss the amount of support generated in opposition to textbook loans, Rockefeller was able to agree, pointing to one pile of letters. He then politely chopped him off at the ankles by pointing to another pile, several times larger, applauding his action.

The reason Jimmy Carter could waltz on his promise to aid parents who prefer God-centered schools, selling them out to the National Education Association (NEA), was that he saw that the NEA has a powerful, well-heeled lobby, whereas parents preferring God-centered schools are poorly organized.

Carter was also aided by the ignorance of principals of religiously oriented schools who refused to send home, via the children, factual

statements about the position of the presidential candidates. (Under current IRS regulations, this is permissible.)

Incidentally, I recall nothing in the Courier-Journal, in the two months prior to the election, saying that Carter had waltzed. I believe it was the fairminded Association for Public Justice, a Protestant group, which said that Carter had, in effect, lied to Catholic parents.

The Essential Requirement for passage of tuition tax credit legislation is for parents, as well as others supporting freedom of choice in education, to unite for political action in groups such as CEF. Unless there is an active constituency backing proposed legislation, any politician is free to ignore it. In the Greater Rochester area such action is doubly important because the secular press, combining cavernous ignorance with anti-Catholic prejudice, will suppress and slant the news on this point as it sees fit.

In a subsequent letter I shall discuss what seem to me a serious oversight in Father Reese's article.

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March for Life Jan. 17

Editor:

It is significant that President-elect Reagan will be sworn in as president of the U.S. just two days before the eighth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion on demand. It is significant because, for the first time since that 1973

Supreme Court ruling, we will have a president that not only supports efforts to pass a Human Life Amendment but also supports "the appointment of judges to all levels of the judiciary who respect traditional values and the sanctity of innocent human life."

On Jan. 22, concerned people from all across the nation will remember this infamous ruling with special public events. Locally, the Rochester Area Right to Life Committee will be sponsoring a March for Life on Saturday, Jan. 17. A prayer service at 2 p.m. at Bethel Full Gospel Church (321 East Ave.) will precede the march. Immediately after, the prayer service participants will march down East Avenue to the Liberty Pole and then back to the church. Hot chocolate and coffee will be provided in the church hall after the march.

This year's March for Life is important because of its closeness to the successes of the last election. A large turnout will help keep the momentum going.

If you believe that Christians cannot be silent while more than one million unborn children are destroyed each year in our country then please join us as we pray and march for the unborn on Jan. 17.

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Bishops Exempt?

Editor:

The U.S. bishops' statement decrying capital punishment (CJ 12/31/80) deserves comment. The bishops wrote: "We believe... the legitimate purposes of punishment do not justify the imposition of the death penalty."

In the light of Pope John Paul II's defense of capital punishment it leads me to ask this question: Are the U.S. Catholic bishops now exempt from following the teachings of the Holy See?

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How to Fight Death Penalty

Editor:

With 700 persons on death row, the United States is one of seven nations intending to carry out executions on a large scale. The other six countries are South Africa, Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan — all considered to be repressive governments. This fact was stated by Larry Cox of Amnesty International at the recent Northeast Regional Death Penalty Abolition Conference in New Haven, Conn.

In 1971, the U.S. signed a United Nations resolution advocating restricting the use of the death penalty aiming toward ultimate abolition. This resolution was reaffirmed in 1977. The current trend in this country, however, seems to favor capital punishment.

There is no reliable evidence that the existence of a death penalty deters crime. There is, however, evidence that poor and minority people are more likely to receive the death sentence.

The statistics, sociological and political implications can be debated over and over again. As Christians, however, we profess a belief in the "resurrection" that is founded on hope. It is this hope that convinces us that change is possible. During this season of hope, we are encouraged by the recent statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops. "First, abolition sends a message that we can break the cycle of violence, that we need not take life for



"GIVE YOUR HUSBAND SOME SLACK, MRS. LEAHY! YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING HIM UNDER YOUR THUMB TOO MUCH!"

Dave Allen Termed Crude

Editor:

I have just written to TV Station WXXI in reference to a program called "Dave Allen at Large," and I hope other readers will do the same. Mr. Allen has had some rather crude stories in his monologues lately involving Catholic clergy. I am subscriber to WXXI and I have written to let them know that this type of "entertainment" is not appreciated.

They have so many other good programs that I hope that they will replace it. Thank you for letting me bring this matter to others' attention.

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