

Editorials

Let's Defeat Casino Gambling

The State Catholic Conference, the Albany-based voice of all the bishops of New York State, has been working assiduously on many issues affecting state residents, perhaps foremost at this time the question of raising public assistance to the indigent.

The conference's efforts on other continuing concerns has not diminished, such as on the questions of euthanasia, abortion, capital punishment.

But a new, major and urgent problem has popped up this year — casino gambling in our state.

This issue represents what may seem to some, a ticklish question. We all know (though we do not all agree on the idea) that many parishes depend on some form of recreational gambling for support. The Church does not oppose such pursuits as long as the activities are recreational, practiced in moderation with due

regard for family needs. The Church assumes a morally neutral stance under those conditions.

But the bishops of the state view casino gambling as a horse of a different color.

The State Catholic Committee will vote for defeat of the casino gambling bills before the legislature with vehemence because of "the attendant social and moral evils."

In a flurry of last-minute activities last session, the legislation passed eight resolutions establishing casino gambling in our state. Because such legislation requires a constitutional amendment, the resolutions must pass again this year and then go to a referendum in November. The proposals being considered require that a local enabling legislation is all necessary.

Eight areas of the state are affected — Long Beach, Niagara Falls, the Rockaways and the counties of New York, Kings, Erie, Sullivan and Ulster.

Casino gambling will be an incendiary issue and the arguments in favor often seem logical and appealing. Proponents will tell us that tax revenues will be increased, unemployment reduced, tourism enhanced, organized crime thwarted.

Before taking a public stand on the issue, the State Catholic Committee sponsored a study of the subject, concentrating on the effects of casino gambling in neighboring New Jersey. Findings of this study knock the blocks out from under pro-casino arguments; indeed the study produced other startling anti-casino evidence (such as "substantial increased cost for police forces, expanded judicial and correctional facilities, and other necessary services").

The issue of casino gambling is directly at hand in our state. The Courier-Journal opposes its institution. We suggest you save this editorial as well as the one which will appear in next week's edition in which we will refute individually the arguments in favor of casinos as well as publish other evidence detrimental to the casinos.

Now It Begins

Pity the President!

After one week in office, Ronald Reagan was pilloried by leaders of the New Right who expressed dissatisfaction with his accomplishments.

and Opinions

Active Jail Ministries

Editor:

Very often the women and men in our jails and state prisons are a forgotten or ignored part of the human family. Our work has pointed out this fact to us and in particular we are aware of the problems facing women both in our County Jail and New York State Prisons. We want to share with you what our ministries are attempting to do for and with these women.

Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry (RIJM) began in 1970 and consists of two fulltime staff persons and almost 70 volunteers. After training, our volunteers visit pre-trial men and women in our County Jail. During 1979, 85 percent of the inmates in the jail were awaiting trial of sentencing, some for as long as a year. Our ministry also advocates for reform within the system; hopes to meet the basic human needs of those we visit, and tries to educate the community about the problems facing incarcerated men and women. Several times a year we hold training sessions for potential volunteers. The vast majority of our financial support comes from the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities.

Women's Prison Project has worked for over six years with incarcerated women in the state prison system. Our work includes trying to build bridges between outside communities and incarcerated women: developing programs for women both while in prison and upon release, doing counseling and developing employment service programs, and extensive public education. We have just recently begun plans to bring some of our services to the women in the Monroe County Jail. Women's Prison Project has two staff persons, one of whom is a former inmate, and we utilize a whole range of volunteers. Our funding comes from religious groups, foundations and individuals.

We believe in trying to live the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: "When I was in prison you visited me." We invite you to join us in these ministries at any or a variety of levels. Our newsletters can offer you come further insights. RIJM's is "Incommunicado" and

Women's Prison Project's is "In the Free." For copies contact us.

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St. Bernard's To Be Missed

Editor:

The recent decision by Bishop Matthew Clark to close St. Bernard's Seminary has had a great deal of media coverage in the Rochester area. The lay support staff of St. Bernard's felt it was time for us to let people know our feelings on this situation from the viewpoint of lay people who have worked there for many years. We were very disappointed to hear the Bishop's decision, especially we have been involved in a very real way in the seminary's life and saw the many positive things that were taking place. It is distressing when a decision of this magnitude and far-reaching consequences can be made by one person. It is also upsetting when jobs for lay people are eliminated.

Many people are not aware of the contribution St. Bernard's was making to the diocese through the programs that were being carried out. St. Bernard's is the center for not only the training of future priests for this diocese and other dioceses, but also for the education of men and women interested in theology and church ministry. Many other programs are at the seminary: Continuing Education, Permanent Diaconate, Ministry to Priests, Renewal and Retreat programs for groups in the diocese, and the newly-formed Boys Choir, consisting of youngsters from various parishes. Also, housed in the seminary are the archives of the diocese, of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen and of the Rochester Catholic Worker, along with an 80,000-volume library. All of these things were brought about or built upon during the four years Father Frank Lioi served as rector. To reduce heating and maintenance expense, consolidation and renovation took place. The

North Building was closed off, making it available for more productive use. The historic buildings acquired landmark city lapdmark status during the last four years and application was in progress to make them national landmarks.

In addition to vocations to the priesthood, seminaries, including St. Bernard's, have responded to the needs of the whole Church, by offering other programs and expanding them to include the education of the laity, under the guidance of the Vatican II document "Decree on the Lay Apostolate," which called the laity to a more active involvement in the Church. St. Bernard's lay student enrollment was growing. Where will the laity be educated?

We all enjoyed working at St. Bernard's Seminary and loved the feeling of community shared by everyone. We feel we have grown in sharing that community and in the friendships we have made through our involvement there. St. Bernard's truly will be missed!

Mrs. Ann Rohnke 1200 Jackson Rd. Webster, N.Y. 14580

Editor's Note: This letter also was signed by Florence Hevron, Marcia Stillman, Gloria J. Ferguson, Margaret E. Miner, Helene Myers, Barbara E. Nielsen and Phyllis Rapp.

Watch Carefully

Editor:

The Office of Religious Education in cooperation with Genesee Ecumenical Ministries has recommended the viewing of "The Christians. A Tapestry of History and Culture," a 13-week series being shown on Channel 21.

Although we were unable to preview any of the programs, we were convinced of the high quality production values so characteristic of BBC productions. We knew also that the series was well researched as evidenced by McGraw-Hill's backing.

However, it has come to our attention that some of the programs do not cast the Roman Catholic Church in a "favorable light." This comment from a concerned viewer is a reminder of the

importance of careful and critical viewing.

The National Catechetical Directory reminds us "People need to acquire 'literacy' in relation to the new media, that is, they need to grow in their ability to evaluate television and other contemporary media by critical standards which include gospel values."

Letters sent to this office will be helpful in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the series.

Father Lewis Brown Director of Religious Education 1150 Buffalo Rd. Rochester, N.Y. 14624

Wrong to Invite Curran Here

Editor:

To read that Rev. Charles Curran was to speak at Nazareth College was no surprise. Nor was it surprising to read of the co-sponsoring organizations with the exception of the Association of Religious Educators, School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The latter organizations represent people to whom Catholic parents continue to entrust the religious education of their children. Upon inquiry, I learned that permission to co-sponsor the talk was given by only a few members of these organizations, but this does not necessarily alleviate my concern.

Vatican II reaffirmed the teaching authority of the Church. On the other hand, Father Curran has popularized dissent from Church teachings and has been a leader in making divisiveness seem the flexible, innovative "in thing."

He has influenced many, and that, in turn, has affected ethical practices in medicine, the formation of priests, Sisters and religious educators and, consequently, the proper formation of our children in the Faith. I doubt if we will ever be able to measure his influence on Catholic marriage.

The sponsorship of Rev. Curran by all these groups calls into question their philosophy and objectives. It is like a red warning light. It

clearly indicates a problem.

Jeanne D. Sweeney 135 Nob Hill Rochester, N.Y. 14617

Editor:

My sincere condolences to those religious who are responsible for sponsoring a talk by Dr. Charles Curran at Nazareth College (Courier-Journal: 1-28-81).

These co-sponsoring organizations, the Association of Religious Educators, Campus Ministries, Diocesan Sisters Council, Pastoral Assistants Association, Rochester Regional Task Force of Women in the Church, School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph, must surely have more up their sleeves than their elbows.

Dr. Curran, in my opinion, is "the exemplary exponent of the ephemeral." And Jacques Maritain, that stupendous bastion of intelligence and humility who wished to restore the earnest quest for truth in our age of aberration of that truth, appropriately called such expositions of Curranism the "Grand Sophistry" of our day which eventually humbles oneself to the degrading and humiliating position of "kneeling before the world" rather than the "Kingdom of God on earth — the Church" (the Peasant of

the Gassone). The recent sponsorship of Dr. Curran by these local organizations only verifies this awkward and presumably aching position.

Referring to Nazareth College, Father Vincent P. Miceli recently wrote in the January issue of the "Homiletic and Pastoral Review" a most accurate analysis of Dr. Curran and sums up what an authentic Catholic university's position ought to be. "True knowledge is important of error, of falsehood, of quackery. No one in his right mind will entrust his body to a surgeon who is a quack doctor. Nor will anyone order his prescription from an incompetent pharmacist. Man must be intolerant of error, of incompetence, of quackery; his very life, well-being and, indeed, the common good, depend on this healthy intolerance. Man's proper response to falsehood is to reject and denounce it; his proper response to truth is to seek and speak it. No professions will tolerate quacks. Why should the university?"

Richard V. Hussar 340 Jordan Ave. Rochester, N.Y. 14606

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"I KNOW IT'S FRUSTRATING, HELEN, BUT IF THE BOY DOESN'T WANT TO GO TO CHURCH..."

COURIER-... Sci... Follow Pope J students... Our science function and no Precisel... ment, this pr constit when i must a... Scier... quetic the fr... quetic postpo... fidence mind... space break... "scient to the... Mo... Puni... And... Editor: I feel Robert I in which evidenc penaltie cited t Ehrlich addition between resulted seven of Contrar these n confirm vestiga methoc question... Usin... and ex only in deterre Ehrlich what t 1962-6 robber; aggrav; more murder for th been c few Sc in all years someti that execut to cc effect with tl... Sop recent Bower "Crim gave... De... Ti new noon the publ