

Editorials

Casino Gambling Won't Work

In last week's editorial, we pointed out that the Church's opposition to casino gambling may seem inconsistent to the casual observer.

This stems from the fact that the Church has never been opposed to gambling "per se." It has never objected to "recreational gambling," practiced in moderation and with due regard for a family's other needs. Under such circumstances, the Church has maintained a morally neutral stance.

However, the bishops of New York State do not take a neutral view of casino gambling and have written every legislator expressing their strong opposition to the establishment of casino gambling in this state.

Eight bills passed the last session of the legislature in 1980 which would establish casinos for gambling in New York. Because a constitutional amendment would be required, the proposals must pass this session of the legislature and then go to a referendum in November.

Last week, we emphasized the moral reasons for opposing casino gambling. This week, we will look at specific arguments in favor and attempt to refute them.

A series of public hearings on the matter have

produced widely divergent estimates as to the amount of tax revenue casino gambling would produce — from \$77 million to \$600 million.

It is traditional to overestimate potential revenues — in 1967 it was predicted that the State Lottery would raise \$180 million a year — in 1978 it raised only \$96 million.

In 1970, when Off Track Betting was introduced, the figure predicted as annual net revenue was \$100 million; the actual figure for 1978 was \$59 million.

We will read that the casinos will reduce unemployment. An enticing prospect indeed, but such has not been case in neighboring New Jersey. True, Resorts International in Atlantic City put on 3,000 employees but there was an exodus of people from other jobs to the casinos — one of the most painful aspects being that many teachers left their jobs for the more lucrative casino positions. Many small shops and businesses were closed down out of competition from casino concessions.

And surprisingly, although unemployment figures dipped at first they soon began to rise and have actually surpassed pre-casino days.

Proponents may tell us that legalized gambling thwarts organized crime. Only the most naive will buy that — anytime millions of dollars of gambling money is floating about, organized crime will be on the scene.

In addition, New Jersey spent \$10 million to regulate and try to keep crime out of casino gambling.

Furthermore, there is a startling increase in other crimes — street crime rose by 25 percent in Atlantic

City since the advent of casino gambling. Rapes and robberies were up 33 percent and murders and car thefts showed even more dramatic surges.

Write to your state senators and assemblymen on the matter. Remember they may be prone to let the proposals pass and "let the people decide." So anyone who feels strongly about casino gambling must express that sentiment to the legislators now.

Father Tormey

Father Richard T. Tormey was first and foremost a priest. But he also was a far-sighted communicator of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Back in 1949, when television was generally a baby in Rochester, the then associate editor of this newspaper was on the scene at WHAM-TV inspecting the new equipment, undoubtedly with an eye to its future use.

He conducted series of radio broadcasts, as well as serving as editor, then executive editor of the Courier-Journal. And when Bishop Joseph L. Hogan inaugurated the diocesan Office of Communications, he didn't have to look far for its first director — Father Tormey fit the bill.

A colleague of his, with perhaps the egocentric idea that journalism is the end-all of all professions, asked Father Tormey if he were disappointed at leaving the communications office when he was named pastor at St. Stephen's in Geneva.

"Goodness, no," came the quick rejoinder. "Being a pastor is the dream and basic job of every priest."

and Opinions

Papal Works Office?

Editor:

Since my question has been tested — meaning that it keeps coming back — it seems proper to pose it.

As a busy mother who must grasp at spiritual reading with breakfast and lunch and infrequent odd hours, I am continually frustrated at not being able to scan, much less meditate on, the tremendous output of our dearly beloved Pope John Paul II. And I need his teaching — this direct line of Christ given to us now — to assist and support my husband's and my efforts to form our children in the Faith.

I manage to scan the General Audiences, but I rarely can do more than mark paragraphs for the others to read. I know from a brief struggle with the Holy Father's phenomenology study of human acts that there is much more there for the instruction and comfort of youth and age alike. A clerk at Trant's last week had never heard of "The Jeweler's Shop," and yet this book should be stockpiled at the offices of Pre-Cana and Cana and the Tribunal. This Meditation on Matrimony should be everybody's engagement and wedding present from the Bishop, and it should accompany every application for annulment.

Should there not be a small diocesan office — with just enough of a budget to buy books and papers and staffed with our brilliant and holy retired priests who love and follow the Pope — dedicated to digesting the current and previous output of the Holy Father and putting out monthly summaries and detailed reviews for those who would buy them? And might not this influence quickly expand beyond the confines of our diocese and soon pay for itself?

Please, Bishop Clark? An

excerpt in the Courier is not enough.

Judith B. Echaniz
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Social Issues Need Support

Editor:

This is New York State budget time. It is the time for Christians to speak up on social issues. We have written our state senator and assemblyman on issues, as follows:

CORRECTION: We must spend whatever it takes to relieve overcrowding, but before committing ourselves to a specific building program we should devote adequate funding and maximum effort to studying and implementing alternatives to incarceration. Also we favor every prisoner having access to education or vocational training. Punishment is the immediate necessity, but rehabilitation should be our ultimate goal.

MENTALLY HANDICAPPED: It is, of course, impossible to legislate things like this, but love, acceptance and security for our mentally ill should be the overriding goal, whatever it may cost. De-institutionalizing programs should be fully implemented, but this must be in no way a shotgun operation. There must be thorough pre-discharge training; adequate, well-supervised housing; accessible socialization, activity and recreation centers.

WELFARE: We favor a 20 percent increase in the basic Public Assistance rate. The value of the dollar has deteriorated catastrophically since the last increase. But this should not be considered a satisfactory solution to anything but the immediate need. The whole welfare structure needs to be overhauled. We are still working on the principle that it is easier to throw a hungry



Tell me again how unborn babies have no doubt

man a few dollars than to help him to feed himself.

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Reader Rejoices

Editor:

Rejoice! The U.S.A. has a pro-life president, Ronald Reagan, who appoints a pro-life Secretary of Health and Services, Richard Schweiker; New York State has a pro-life senator, Al D'Amato, who speaks out strongly for life at the Ellipse behind the White House before the impressive march down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, where thousands visit the offices of their senators and representatives to let them know life is worth working for; Americans rejoice in the possibility of a real turnaround from the brutalizing, dehumanizing descent of our society, symbolically joining

the red rose and the yellow ribbon as we lovingly attest to the value of each human life and welcome our hostages home.

But what do we see of this in Rochester? The Courier-Journal carries a minimal of both national and local March for Life activities, never mentioning our Sen. Al D'Amato and his support for life, ignoring such names as Helms, Dornan, Hatch and Denton who are doing in the U.S. Capitol what Pope John Paul II promised, "To stand up and proclaim that no one ever has the authority to destroy unborn life;" ignoring the presence of state and country representatives such as Tom Hanna, James Nagle, Roger Robach, Gary Proud, Sam Soprano at the Right to Life appreciation dinner on Jan. 16; relying too often on Religious News Service for articles of national and international significance (readers might be interested in a description of this news service); giving unwarranted front page coverage to the

opinions of two unknowns on the El Salvador situation.

If the contributions of former Sen. James Buckley had not been as studiously ignored when he represented us in the U.S. Senate, New York State might today have two pro-life senators, two votes to cast for a Human Life Amendment. Let us not make the same mistake again. Let us support and publicize the efforts of good men. Let us reap the psychological rewards of a deserved celebration of progress, a rejuvenation of our commitment to work for life, especially by our determination to elect more pro-life legislators (and executives) at every election, on every level.

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El Salvador Junta Faulted

Editor:

As a member of Amnesty International, the worldwide human rights organization, I received this morning new information on more arrests of human rights people in El Salvador. As a member of the International Justice and Peace Commission which tries to introduce and implement the work of Amnesty International in this diocese I am deeply disturbed. As an American citizen I am outraged.

The Human Rights Commission of El Salvador, an independent monitoring group which provides assistance to victims of human rights violations and publicizes their cases, has long been the object of harassment by government security forces and police.

In early October 1980, Maria Magdalena Enriquez, member of El Salvador's Human Rights Commission, was found murdered. A few days later, Oct. 26, Ramon Valladares, administrator of the commission, was assassinated. On Jan. 25, 1981, Victor Medrano, information and administrative

secretary for the commission, was abducted by armed men in plain clothes and his whereabouts continue to be unknown. Amnesty International has grave fears for his life.

The Human Rights Commission of El Salvador has been under prolonged and systematic attack. Its members are obviously considered to be totally expendable.

Why is it because the people of the commission carefully document the violation of human rights committed against the El Salvador people by security forces, police and national guard? A fundamental duty of any government and one that gives credibility and legitimacy is its ability to control its own military and police forces. The present junta appears to be clearly incapable of doing this.

Yet this junta is supported by the U.S. government with recently renewed military aid, including arms. It does not stretch the imagination to figure out that our tax dollars are going to support a government that allows or makes possible the abduction and assassination of harassed and beleaguered human rights workers in El Salvador.

Unfortunately this kind of news does not often get into the public press. We read, instead, of how Russia and Cuba are supplying arms to the allegedly carefully qualified "Marxist" guerrillas. We seldom read about the harassment and deaths of human rights workers.

The Courier-Journal is to be congratulated for its recent generous and balanced coverage of the situation in El Salvador, especially for the report of the visit last month of Sister Margaretta Navarro, SSJ, and Mr. Ivan Escobar, themselves members of the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador. It is their co-workers on the commission who are being so systematically and brutally killed.

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