

Editorials



Capital Punishment

and Opinions

Two Urge Habits for Nuns

Editor:

Re the letter of Sharon Pearte in the March 25 edition, "Religious Garb." I heartily agree with her.

Today, in this fast moving world, respect for the nuns and priests seems to be vanishing due to the civilian clothes the nuns and priests wear.

When Bishop Kearney was alive he saw to it that the nuns dressed as nuns, not as civilians. Since he has gone, the trend to wearing civilian clothes by the nuns increased under Bishops Sheen and Hogan. Now it is up to Bishop Matthew Clark to enforce the Pope's request that they wear religious garb when appearing in public, to let the people know they are truly nuns, not just ordinary people. The same applies to priests. Today's modern society dictates the fashions of dress and appearances and the nuns and priests are caught in the web of secularism. It is nothing unusual to see young priests saying Mass with beards, long hair and mistaches

It's about time for the nuns and priests to garb themselves as religious and not civilians, thus showing the people that they are working for God's Church.

Hat's off to Sharon Pearte for her letter.

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Editor:

I concur wholeheartedly with Sharon Pearte who, in her March 25 letter, urged the return to wearing religious garb by nuns.

I wish to go further and urge priests to wear the traditional garb.

I know many will say, "It's what is in the heart that counts." I submit that others cannot read what is in the heart; it needs to be demonstrated, not only by words but by something which can be seen.

I do know that both priests and nuns who now get about as much respect as Rodney Dangerfield from not only non-Catholics but from many Catholics would fare much better were they to dress the part of servants of the most

high God, and feel sure the number of religious vocations would increase.

In 1978, the Abbey of Regina Laudis, Bethlehem, Conn., was forced to establish the Oratory of Our Lady of the Rock in Shaw Island, Wash. I have personal knowledge of this as our daughter, Mother Miriam Benedict, along with Mother Prisca Dougherty, a Rochesterian, and Rev. Mother Therese Gritchley, were the establishing pioneers of that community. That community — and, I am led to believe, the Trappesines of Wrentham, Mass. — is thriving and I believe others, not only the contemplative orders, are doing likewise.

Last year while visiting our favorite Religious in Washington, I think through design, she had to visit the dentist in Seattle which is nearly 100 miles away. We were privileged to accompany her and as Shaw Island can only be reached by ferry and the schedule is such that it was necessary to spend the day in Seattle, we accompanied Mother on a shopping tour.

The youngsters who had never seen a nun in religious garb were amused, but the older people could not seem to get close enough. Many, with tears in their eyes, said that beautiful greeting which they

apparently hungered for, "Hello, Sister."

I hope this message will be noted and acted upon by those of our fine Religious communities which are in such desperate straits. Why not try it? I'm sure you'll like it.

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Can't Afford Welfare Raise

Editor:

Taxpayer groups take exception to the Catholic Courier lobbying for a 20 percent increase in welfare grants. The world owes us a living but we have to work hard to collect it. Our forefathers knew the devastation that would be brought to America if the federal government became involved in domestic affairs. When Thomas Jefferson was asked who would be responsible for the disadvantaged and the needy, he is quoted as having said, "Anybody except the federal government!"

Today, the federal government is up to its armpits in social services programs that begin even before conception and reach beyond

Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.

the grave. Also today receiving social services is a way of life. Our forefathers would turn over in their graves if they could see America today.

The social service system has never worked. Putting band-aids on it and pumping more money into it is only delaying the day when we will have to come to grips with the reality that the working class can't carry the poor any longer. We all know the rich pay lip services and token volunteerism to the poor.

Everyone has his hand in the taxpayer's empty pocket. The Legislature keeps raising our taxes. The churches keep up a steady drone for funds for this cause or that charity. Our mail boxes are filled with requests from nonprofit organizations for donations. Our children can no longer go to college but we pay to send the children of welfare recipients to college. We stand in line and watch welfare clients using food stamps and their food baskets are filled with junk food and choice cuts of meat.

While we sign laments for the plight of the poor, we are staring into the face of poverty worse than what they have. We are committed to paying for homes we bought before the 100 percent reassessment of property was thrust on us. We are committed to paying for mandated federal and state programs that few of us approve of.

The bleeding heart do-gooders and clergy who advocate a 20 percent increase in welfare grants had better come up with administrative cuts to make up for them or they can look forward to sharing the burden of paying this exorbitant welfare cost because the taxpayers of yesterday are broke! It is easier for us to join the welfare system than to struggle to retain a shrinking middle working class status that leaves us less to live on than the welfare recipient!

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Guidelines Skipped NFP

Editor:

We would like to comment on the Sacramental Guidelines which appeared in the Courier-Journal March 18. We were disturbed that the guidelines on the Rite of Marriage did not discuss family planning. Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children; married couples should regard this as their proper mission. However, it is well-known that young couples may not want to ignore birth control early in their marriage. The

Church must offer guidance to these young couples.

There is a family planning method for all married couples in their fertile years. "God has wisely arranged natural laws and rhythms of fertility, which already of themselves bring about a separation of the succession of births" (Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, July 25, 1968). To live in accordance with the natural laws of fertility, a couple must first understand their fertility. The knowledge and use of this information in the context of marriage is better known as Natural Family Planning (NFP).

The Sacramental Guidelines indicate "that marriage preparation should begin at least six months before any anticipated date for the wedding." This is the ideal time for a couple to start learning about their fertility, and the NFP way of life. Starting NFP and marriage together is a beautiful testimony of love and faith, to one another and to God. "Whenever Christian spouses in a spirit of sacrifice and trust in Divine Providence carry out their duties of procreation with generous human and Christian responsibility, they glorify the Creator and perfect themselves in Christ" (Vatican Council 1965).

We suggest the guidelines be amended to include discussion of *Humanae Vitae* as part of the marriage preparation program. "To Priests — Your first task ... to expound without ambiguity the Church's teaching on marriage" (*Humanae Vitae*, 28). This discussion should take place at the initial session with the priest.

In the spite of *Humanae Vitae* and all the positive aspects of NFP proclaimed by the Pope, the Diocese of Rochester still ceases to advocate and promote it. The social ministries prompted in our diocese are an excellent extension of our faith, but should complement the traditional teachings of our Church and not be in place of them.

The traditional teachings of *Humanae Vitae* are a vital part of marriage preparation and married life and we are short-changing our engaged couples by not making the information readily available. Pre-Cana would be an ideal time to present NFP information to the engaged couple. Presently, there is no diocesan directive that NFP be presented, nor is the Pre-Cana program standardized throughout the diocese. Everyone should be made aware that "rhythm" has long been outdated and NFP is a scientifically proven, highly effective means of family planning.

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