

Editorials

The Holy Father

"Think about your predecessors," the new Swiss Guards were being told. "Some of them were asked to make the sacrifice of their lives in the fulfillment of their duty.

"Let us pray," the speaker continued, "that the Lord will keep violence and fanaticism far from the walls of the Vatican. But openness to give one's life, should this be necessary, can become a reality even in your service."

The speaker was Pope John Paul II, just a week before he very nearly gave his own life.

In still another coincidence, less than a week before last Wednesday's assassination attempt, the Holy Father celebrated a special outdoor Mass in the Vatican Gardens to mark the feast day of St. Stanislaus of Cracow, the great Polish martyr. St. Stanislaus was killed by King Boleslaus while he was celebrating Mass. The famous saint was almost joined by another great man in martyrdom last week.

Coming so near to the attempted assassination of our own president, the Vatican shooting leaves a kind of empty feeling, a sense of futility, questions rather than answers. Why? Why this man? Why any man? Why? Why?

Plainly, nothing can be done to ensure perfect security for our leaders. They must appear in public; we need them for that, especially the Holy Father. And he himself wouldn't have it any other way. God

willing, he survives — and when he does, we can be sure that will he will continue his fond pursuit of seeing and touching his faithful.

To do so will engender further risks. As one office worker observed, "It's great to be an unknown." Sad to say, there is truth in the quip. Our public figures have become increasingly in recent years our public targets.

Facing that fact is more than frightening. It's debilitating.

Prayer is all that's left to us. No lectures, no laws, no system can change the picture. We must pray, immediately for the good Pope John Paul. And we must pray for ourselves, for we are all victims of such shattering violence. Prayer may provide the answers; it certainly nourishes our hope.

and Opinions

Death Penalty Acceptable

Editor:

I am one of those "barbarous," "misguided individuals" attempting to "dehumanize society" by not opposing capital punishment. I am one of those whom you equated biblically "as the crowd shouts figuratively, 'Kill him, kill him' just as you equated Christ with the rapist or mass murderer who faces the death penalty for his crimes. I am one of those you called two-faced and equated with Gov. Carey's stand on abortion because I violently oppose abortion but do not oppose capital punishment.

Previous to your April 29 editorial, I was not aware that His Holiness, Pope John Paul, was editor of the Courier-Journal and used this means to teach ex officio the formal doctrines of the Catholic Church. The vehemence of your editorial, its pontifical tone, the unwavering castigation of us poor sinners and its appearance in the official newspaper of the diocese can lead to no other conclusion.

There is no question of the morality of abortion. It is taking the life of a totally innocent human being. According to the official and long-standing doctrine of the Catholic Church, this is simply murder.

You equate totally the death penalty with abortion. You say that, if abortion is wrong then so is capital punishment. You say the bishops oppose capital punishment "with the same rich reasoning" that they oppose abortion.

If the Pope has indeed proclaimed infallibly the official Church doctrine that capital punishment is murder and morally wrong, then I apologize for somehow not being aware of this binding doctrine.

If not, I respect your right to hold a humanitarian opinion that is not contrary to Church doctrine. I do not respect you or appreciate your attempts to force your opinion on all Catholics by using the power of the press for name-calling, quasi-official proclamations, usurping Papal power and negating the freedom of Catholics to hold their own individual opinions in moral judgment where there is no official, binding Catholic doctrine.

It is not simply a question of the morality of capital punishment. It is the question of the credibility of the Courier-Journal. How can a Catholic believe or be guided by any article when it may be no more than the vehement but personal opinion of the editorial staff.

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Editor's Note: The editorial did not call proponents of capital punishment "barbarous" but it did refer to the death penalty as an "ages-old barbarous futility." The bishops of the United States formally and officially declared their opposition to capital punishment in 1974. After the Supreme Court paved the way for resumption of the death penalty, the bishops again went on record in November 1980, declaring that their commitment to the "sanctity of human life in all its stages" was the basis for their call for the abolition of the death penalty. The State Catholic Committee in Albany at the behest of the state's bishops is working to prevent the establishment of capital punishment in this state.

Staff Should Get Credit

Editor:

Re Father Cuddy of May 6: We thought it was a beautiful tribute to the religious, staff

and the people of St. Larence Parish. Although we have many Italian families in St. Lawrence, we do not believe that it is "the Italian heritage" that mainly contributes to the Christian community that we are experiencing here. It has been the guidance and stimulation of our pastor, Father Murphy, Associate Pastor, Father Lou Vasile and our Religious staff, Sisters Diane, Roberta and Concepta, that has stirred our melting pot into a community of faith, love and concern.

Our school, which we think is tops, strongly emphasizes family involvement and participation. This includes preparing our children and ourselves for the sacraments, liturgy and many other communal events. We also have a great number of renewal people (as mentioned in Father Cuddy's article) who are quite active.

Our community begins each week by sharing the Eucharist at Sunday Mass but it doesn't end there. It continues throughout the week with many faith fortifiers such as adult education, rosary society, men's club, parish council and its many active committees, folk group, choir, youth group and many more. We believe that the people of St. Lawrence are striving for the ideal — the Christian family community. It's not easy but then again He never said it would be. Our heritage is "to love one another as He loves us."

We write this letter in love and not to criticize or de-emphasize Father Cuddy's beautiful tribute; but rather to elaborate on the reasons we think St. Lawrence is a growing and live parish. It gave us the incentive to do something we so often fail to do and that is to thank all those who make it so.

Gerry and Ginny Sullivan
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Governor A Dictator

Editor:

The Chinese have a saying to the effect that when a wise man argues with a fool it soon becomes impossible to tell which is the wise man and which is the fool. With this in mind let us consider a current dispute: the role of the death penalty and life imprisonment in our judicial system.

Not only are there fools arguing with wise men but some of the "facts" which are offered in support of either choice sound like they qualify for the computer maxim — garbage in, garbage out. While it might be conceded that both sides are only trying to do good, their inability to agree

on whether to punish or rehabilitate, whether to follow the Old Testament's an eye-for-an-eye or the New Testament's turn the other cheek, leaves the law abiding at the continuing lack of mercy of the lawless and their financial benefactors.

In New York, we have a unique situation. The will of a majority and the wishes of the legislature are negated by one man. In El Salvador, he would be called a dictator by some. In New York, he is still called governor by all.

The \$64 question — How much longer are the "rights" and welfare of the lawless going to be allowed to override the fundamental protection of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of the law abiding before, as with the fool and the wise man, it becomes impossible to tell whether we are in violent, crime-ridden New York or war-torn El Salvador?

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Double Reason To Remember

Editor:

This month of May is a very special time to remember our spiritual Mother because of the celebration of the 450th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

To truly show love for Jesus is also to show love and respect for His Mother. He not only showed this love and respect to Her when He was on earth but expects us to do the same. Mary said, "For behold henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed, for He who is mighty has done great things for me." Luke 1:48.

Our Lord even to this day shows great love and respect for His Mother by the thousands of churches dedicated to her honor.

"In every nation which shall bear Thy name, the God of Israel shall be magnified on occasion of Thee," Judith 13:3. Our love for Mary does not diminish our love for Jesus but magnifies it. "For He has so magnified Thy name this day, that Thy praise shall not depart out of the mouths of men." This foretells the many rosaries said down through the ages and in the times to come.

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe given to the world by God, Himself, and not to be equated with idol worship, portrays the unity of this scriptural theme — "I saw the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride, all dressed

for her husband." Apocalypse Revelation (21) which describes the New Creation, all things renewed in Christ.

Mary in her Immaculate Conception is the beginning, the fullness and perfection of that New Creation. Our Lady of Guadalupe is also known as Our Lady of the Apocalypse. She is mantled with the new sky (stars) and robed with terrestrial perfection (flowers). The new and heaven and earth are united in her. In her, the glory of God blazes forth (sun's rays) to dispel the time of evil (storm clouds). Even the angels submit to serve this great mystery. There will be no more death and no mourning of sadness (black moon). The world of the past is gone (clouds). Now I am making the whole of creation, new (mantle and dress).

Thus Mary of Guadalupe portrays the day of the Lord, and gives us the promise of a particular grace — the grace of a new creation.

Let us pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth, and empress of the Americas, asking her to be made a part of this new creation. To Jesus through Mary.

Mary Kelly
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Dealer Lauded For Policy

Editor:

I am sending this message to the Courier-Journal about the very FIRST advertisement to further the observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day. It is Michael Pichler's, president of Pichler Pontiac, reading: "Out of respect for our employees, their families and you — the

customers — we will always remain Closed on Sunday."

Hurray for one lone individual daring to proclaim his staunch Christian stand on keeping AND promoting God's third Commandment.

As the world increases in secularization to the utmost, it forsakes the Almighty God by exchanging "him" for their "almighty dollars!"

Business as usual becomes mandatory at times on Sundays or else pressure is brought to bear on those refusing to concede to these anti-God tyrants, demanding their law of "Open on Sundays" be kept — or else be closed forever!

This is the basic stepping stone in the RIGHT direction. May it continue and succeed. Please, God!

Edna C. Faulkner
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Fair Is Fair

Editor:

We have been led to believe that President Reagan wants all of us to economize. Some programs are allotted less money to work with. Just about everybody is expected to take a cut in their income.

What we haven't heard is that President Reagan has come right out and let us know how much cut he is going to make in this salary. It certainly would be a good bit of news to know how much his salary is going to be cut.

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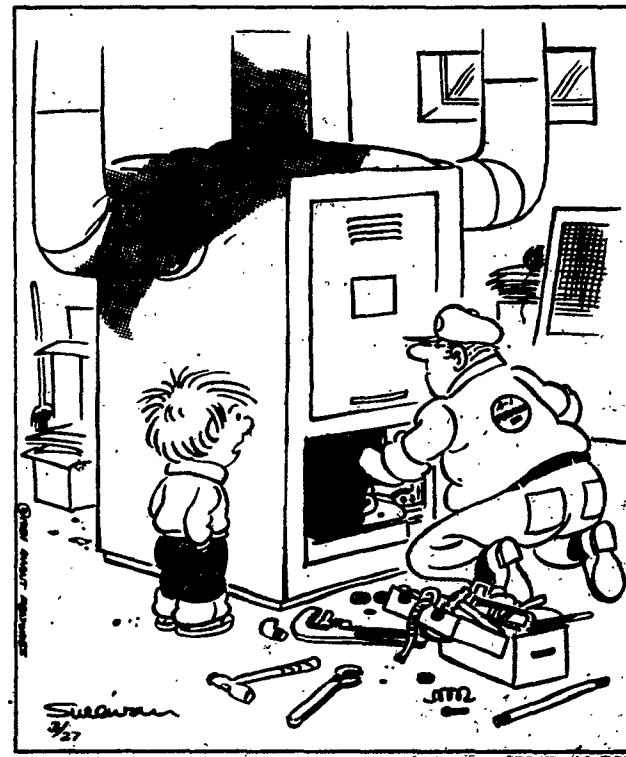
Guidelines

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.



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