

Editorials

Atlanta

National prayers will be answered if the person or persons responsible for the Atlanta tragedies is apprehended by the time this appears in print.

If, however, the culprit is still at large, then the period before the capture (pray God, it is soon) is good time to ponder some very important points.

It is impossible to deny the racial overtones of the series of killings; all the victims are black. But, unless the guilty party is a product of some hate group or has similar affiliation, we caution against attaching any significance to the color of his skin. The horror is more

likely the product of a sick mind, regardless of the color of the killer's skin.

In other past cases, we have all heard people blame a person's race or ethnic background for his crimes. This is bigotry, plain and simple unless, as we pointed out, the person was part of some hate group, such as the Ku Klux Klan.

If the Atlanta killer is white, we hope that blacks will not see the guilt as a racial thing, unless there is supporting evidence to that effect. If he is black, whites should make no racial inferences.

Let us pray first for his apprehension and then that his capture will be the end of a reign of terror and not the beginning of new tension.

Where There's Hope

Although comedian Bob Hope has managed to treat both major political parties with equal jocularity, he somehow has always projected a "conservative" image.

Thus it is particularly gratifying for proponents of gun control legislation that Hope, in the aftermath of the shooting of President Ronald Reagan, publicly announced his support of handgun registration.

"I don't think any jerk that's coked up or anything should be allowed to walk in a store and buy a gun and turn around and shoot 19 people," was how Hope summed up his feelings.

Bravo!

Now if only some of those with liberal leanings would denounce abortion for the reactionary thing it is, we might also recognize that we have more in common than thought.

and Opinions

Re-Endorses Death Penalty

Editor:

In his April 18 letter, Bob Van Sickle accused a letter of April 1 of hypocrisy for supporting the death penalty.

Whether Mr. Van Sickle was referring to my letter or the letter of Mr. Ralph Bleier, an accusation of hypocrisy was unwarranted.

First of all, Mr. Van Sickle does not understand that there is a difference between the life of an innocent, law-abiding citizen and the life of a murderer.

While all life is sacred, it is precisely that reason why there is a need for capital punishment. The murderer is a threat to all human life and capital punishment helps remove that threat. In the absence of capital punishment, the murderer has only a jail sentence to fear with the possibility of early parole.

And despite the Courier-Journal's opposition to the death penalty, the Catholic Church has not changed its position on capital punishment.

The 1980 Catholic Almanac states:

"The political community, which has the authority to defend itself and its members against unjust aggression and may in extreme cases punish with the death penalty per-

sons found guilty of before the law of serious crimes against individuals and a just social order."

And Mayor Edward Koch of New York City recently stated: "I support the re-enactment of the death penalty as an option to be available to the judge and jury. What's interesting to me is that those who oppose it will give you the impression that they are the holders of the Holy Grail and everyone else is immoral. I don't attack their morality, but let me tell you the Bible supports it, the U.S. Supreme Court accepts it, and so does the Pope and for me that is good government."

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Editor's Note: Reader Bart did not continue the quote from the Catholic Almanac which went on: "Such punishment is essentially vindictive. Its value as a crime deterrent is a matter of perennial debate... In 1974, the Catholic bishops of the United States declared their opposition to capital punishment." In 1980, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the official organization of this nation's bishops, reiterated its opposition when it called for the abolishment of the death penalty. That stand has been vigorously supported by the bishops of New York State. In March of 1981, Vatican Radio said the Catholic Church opposed capital punishment, that this was not always the

case but that the death penalty was inconsistent now with Church policy against abortion, euthanasia and "all forms of the destruction of human life." Mayor Koch has the duty to make public his views on such issues but he is definitely not a spokesman for the Church. The Supreme Court in its 1973 decision on liberalized abortion has put its attitude toward human life on record.

Watch 1 Hour With Him

Editor:

A decade or so ago, it was the popular trend among so-called prominent atheists to proclaim that God was dead. Today these "God is deaders" are relatively silent. What a pity that they had not the power to comprehend what we Catholics too often take for granted: that had they simply walked into the nearest Catholic church, they would have found God to be very much alive indeed.

Unfortunately not very many of us Catholics who have been blessed with the one true faith take this sublime reality to heart and to mind as often as we should. The "world" far too often suppresses these supreme thoughts and inclinations on a daily and dutiful basis. There is, however, a local organization which is keeping the practice and piety of Eucharistic worship and realization alive and well in these distracting and therefore demonic days. This organization is the Nocturnal Adoration Society which is represented in nearly every parish in our diocese. It consists of members who have heard the call of our Blessed Lord, "Could you not watch one hour with me" (Mt. 26:40). Just one Holy Hour a month.

Thomas Merton wrote, "Our life of Eucharistic prayer and adoration is, in fact, the beginning of the contemplation of God in Christ which will be our whole life when we enter into His Glory... Here in the greatest of sacraments we find the medicine that will purify our hearts from the contagion which they inevitably contract in a world that does not know God" (The Living Bread). And our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has written, "The veneration of God, who is love, springs, in Eucharistic worship, from that kind of intimacy in which He Himself, by analogy with food and drink, fills our spiritual being, enduring its

life, as food and drink do." This Eucharistic veneration of God therefore strictly corresponds to His saving plan. He Himself, the Father, wants the "true worshippers" to worship Him precisely in this way" (Dominicae Cenae n. 7).

It is the fervent prayer of all nocturnalists that there will be many new members called to share this supreme privilege and unspeakable joy. Anyone wishing to join the Nocturnal Adoration Society should simply contact his or her pastor today. Tomorrow is often too late. The Father wants it, the Son asks for it, and the Holy Father prays for it. Just one Holy Hour a month. And when you are spending your hour with the Lord, be not too surprised if the words of St. Thomas the Apostle come rushing into your consciousness, and with the shattering realization and the wisdom of a Solomon you will slowly and inescapable whisper to Whom you are viewing, My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

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Hate Sins, Love Sinners

Editor:

I'm a practicing Catholic united with Christ, with the Church of Rome and the Diocese of Rochester. I feel that it is my duty to respond to Joseph J. Murray's letter of May 13.

Although I don't like the thought of a priest in a business suit and although I share Mr. Murray's concern over certain things which should be going on in Rochester and elsewhere, I know that Bishop Clark and much of his flock are united with the Church of Rome.

Let us remember the denials of Peter and remember that he was the first Pope. Let us remember Thomas the Doubter. He was not dismissed as an apostle. Let us remember Paul the Persecutor. Look at what he became. Also, for some mysterious reason, Christ chose Judas, although He

knew that Judas would betray Him.

Despite the many sins which most of us commit, the Catholic Church will continue until the end of time. Then the just will go to Heaven and probably will be pleasantly surprised to see some of the ones who were able to get there also. Therefore, while we have the right and duty to criticize some liberals who have gone so far out on a limb that they are in danger of falling off, let us not go to the opposite extreme of the Traditionalists who don't realize that the power of the keys gave the Catholic Church the power to change some kinds of laws such as dietary laws and changing the Mass from Latin to English.

While we must love sinners, we must continue to hate sins such as abortion and homosexuality, no matter how many wolves in sheep's clothing there are (who try to sew cushions under sins).

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Fr. Louis J. Hohman

The Open Window



Sacraments Are Not Magical

Dear Father Hohman,

Regarding "being saved," I would like to add my own observations.

So many of our people live in fear, not peace and joy. They are trying so hard to get to Heaven through devotions, good works, and the Sacraments, without any true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are depending on the Church (Catholic) to save them.

I personally believe too much emphasis is put on the Sacraments. They are there for our use, not our salvation. Confessing that Jesus is my Savior and Lord of my life, and living that life in accordance with the teachings of the Church and the reading of the Scriptures (which sometimes seem contradictory), should give one confidence and trust that he is indeed "saved."

A lot of our people are on the road to perdition because they do not hear Jesus Christ preached, but every Sunday hear a condemning homily on "When was the last time you received the Sacraments?" or "If you don't receive the Eucharist every week, you are going to hell."

I'm not downing the Sacraments. I realize their importance and I use them. They give me strength, comfort and spiritual food, especially the Eucharist. I would hate to be without them, but I could survive and still make it to heaven, because I love Jesus, and He loves me, and He's in my heart to stay.

My heart just breaks when I hear a pious woman who never misses Mass say "I just pray that before I draw my last breath, I will have a chance to receive confession." She honestly believes her salvation lies in this rite.

(Signed) L.C.

Dear L.C.,
It almost goes without

saying that it is the way we perceive things which determines where we will place our emphasis. And it also needs to be noted that the Sacraments are not ends in themselves, but rather means to an end. They are the signs of Christ's presence in our lives, the celebration of that presence. The Church's wisdom through the centuries has seen the Sacraments as important in the maintenance and the growth of our relationship with the Lord Jesus. To simply neglect them out of indifference is to court some kind of disaster. On the other hand, when those Sacraments become all important in themselves, a kind of magical formulas which accumulate some kind of positive score for us in Heaven, then we have gone too far in the other direction.

However the case of the woman you cite may have a simple and beautiful explanation. She may be in a situation of being acutely aware of herself as a sinner, of her ongoing sinfulness before the Lord, and may simply be expressing a need to have His forgiving presence with her especially in her last terrible moments.

P.S. Any priest who said, "If you don't receive the Eucharist every week, you are going to hell," needs a refresher course in theology.



BY GEORGE JENNIFER, GOD IS STILL IN HIS HEAVEN AND ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD. TODAY I SAW SOMEONE WHO WASN'T WEARING JEANS.

COURIER
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CITY AP
alarms
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Jewelry,
clocks,
lamps
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