

Editorials

Abortion Is NOT Liberal

Recently we wondered aloud why more liberals have not recognized abortion for the reactionary act it is and come out in opposition.

Now comes news via the news service, Religion Today, that a member of the Libertarian Party, the philosophy of which is the right of all persons to be free from force, has come out four-square against abortion.

Even though the party's official position is against the government "restricting the right of women to make a personal, moral choice regarding the termination of pregnancy," Mrs. Doris Gordon objects on the grounds that "abortion is not a victimless crime, a mere personal, private, moral matter."

On top of that, the party invited Rep. Ron Paul, a Texas Republican, to keynote its first newsletter and he used the opportunity to admonish Libertarians on their official position regarding abortion.

"Abortion on demand is the ultimate state tyranny," he wrote, according to Religion Today. "The state protects the 'right' of some people to kill others."

And Mrs. Gordon adds, "Excluding some human

beings (the unborn) from the benefit of legal protection is unlibertarian."

And Mrs. Gordon is a self-professed atheist.

Wonderment

We wonder where is the Christianity in a message sent by George A. Kleve, self-described as president of the Anti-Catholic League in Cleveland, Ohio, who just sent the wounded Pope John Paul II an insolent letter, referring to the Holy Father as "a Polish clown." If it were just the rantings of an obvious bigot, it might not be so bad but this one includes so-called Christian tracts with his hate letter.

Now, what was it Jesus Christ said about hypocrites?

and Opinions

Sex Ed Program Criticized

Editor:

I'm writing in reference to "Education in Love: a program in family life and Christian sexuality" (Paulist Press, copyright 1971). This is the sex education program used in our diocesan schools, grades 1 through 8. I'm familiar with the program both as a junior high science teacher and as a parent. My first experience with the program was as a teacher. Presently, I'm dealing with it as a parent.

In my opinion, the "Education in Love" program is lacking in basic Catholic teachings about human sexuality. It also undermines the parental role and the parents' responsibility toward their children in these matters. I disagree with what seems to be the basic premise of the program: "We tend to underestimate badly the out-of-school avenues of access to information young people experience. Unfortunately, information obtained in this way is often faulty and can offset the responsible attitudes that other teachers have worked carefully to build." What the authors failed to point out is that misinformation obtained "in the street" carries no AUTHORITY but

MISINFORMATION IN THE CLASSROOM DOES and can be very detrimental to the child.

Some of the other weak esses:

1. The use of the word "love" in the title. This word is so overused in our culture that it no longer has a significant impact on our thinking. Why wasn't the word "charity" used?

2. Both boys and girls are to be kept together except for menstrual hygiene. This togetherness from Grade 1 breeds familiarity with the opposite sex, whereas some shyness in the early teen years can prove healthy. Youth at this time are busy sorting out their emotions and feelings. Why so much emphasis on keeping boys and girls together?

3. The timetable to cover the 26 understandings completely disregards the normal LATENCY PERIOD: that period between early childhood and puberty when heterosexual drives are apparently inactive or sublimated. Why was this very important period in human development not emphasized in this program?

4. I wonder why Understanding 21 (Parents may control the number of children they have for a number of reasons and in various ways) was included at

all. This discusses various methods of birth control, such as rhythm, mechanical means (condom, diaphragm) and chemical means (foams, jellies, creams) and The Pill. Why does an eighth grader need all this information? The Catholic Church in her Divine Wisdom permits only natural means of birth control. The popes, including John Paul II, have spoken against artificial contraceptives down through the ages.

5. I question the wisdom of incorporating the concepts throughout the curriculum. As an example, Understandings 14 (Personality develops through factors of heredity, environment and individual will) and 15 (Every member of the family has his own personal responsibility to each of the other members) are supposed to be integrated into fifth and sixth grade math, science, language arts, social studies and religion. This fact alone makes it nearly impossible for a concerned parent to voice valid disagreement with any or all parts of the program. Perhaps I have overlooked something but I cannot perceive a valid reason for setting up the program in this manner.

In conclusion, most parents are the best judges of what and how much instruction their children should receive in sex education. Children learn about human sexuality from infancy on through adulthood. Parents can instruct each child on a one-to-one basis and can be very loving and sympathetic to the physical changes that are taking place in their children's bodies. In recent years, parents have turned over to the schools more and more responsibility in educating their children in sexual matters. Schools get their authority from parents to whom God gives the duty and the Graces for educating their children in Truth and Charity. May I suggest workshops and seminars for parents. The family would be strengthened and perhaps we could all help reverse the trend of the past decade that has witnessed a significant increase in promiscuity, teen pregnancies, venereal disease, divorce, abortion, and a general lack of respect for each other, God and His laws.

Mrs. Joann B. May
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Editor's Note: Sister Anne Michelle, SSJ, diocesan assistant superintendent for administration of education, answers: "I would like to respond by addressing an overall view of the Sex Education Curriculum, 'Education in Love.'"

"It is a program in family life and Christian sexuality in which we responded to Vatican II's mandate which stated, 'A true education aims

at the formation of the human person ... young people should be assisted in the harmonious development of their physical, moral and intellectual endowments ... As they advance in years, they should be given positive and prudent sexual education."

"Therefore, we do not treat sex education as a separate subject, but try to address the 'whole person' by integrating the Understandings into the other subject areas. Human sexuality is not 'one piece' of a person, but the whole integrated person. Through our curriculum we try to facilitate the understanding of human growth and what it means to be a human person in God's plan of creation."

"We hope that each child will become aware of what it is to live a richer, deeper human and therefore Christian life."

"In a pastoral letter of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 'Human Life in Our Day,' the bishops see the 'necessity for greater communication and cooperation between parents and teachers.' We also responded to this need by publishing a companion handbook for parents, so that home and school education can be most effectively and harmoniously integrated."

"The Education Office offers consultative services to parents through the individual schools."

What Soldiers Have Said

Editor:

This is time to re-read what two professional soldiers have told us.

Gen. Omar N. Bradley: "Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we do about peace, more about killing than we know about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount."

President Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hope of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the shroud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

Eisenhower then tells us who is mostly responsible for this cloud of threatening war. In 1961, he said: "We have been compelled to create a permanent armament in-

dustry of vast proportions ... We must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. In the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

The Reagan administration rejects these lessons. It proposes to fatten the already bloated military-industrial complex with almost 30 extra billions at the expense of the poor and needy. The nuclear arms race will be accelerated. The poor and needy will suffer despite promises to the contrary.

The ethical infants will say, "What can I do?" and crawl back into their apathy.

Adolphe and Loe D'Audiffret
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Naples, N.Y. 14512

Urges Protest Of Insult

Editor:

In May 1981, London's ambassador to the United States, Sir Nicholas Henderson, defending British policy said there is no social, economic or political discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland. When asked to explain why there is such a disproportionately high rate of unemployment among Catholics, Sir Nicholas replied that the Catholic schools do not prepare their graduates for jobs.

We urge you and your readers to protest this blatant sectarian British propaganda and especially Sir Nicholas Henderson's crass statement

Sacred Heart Month

Editor:

June is the month dedicated to devotion to the Sacred Heart. When we speak of "devotion to the Sacred Heart," we are not thinking of "devotion" in the sense of some inclination we gave to honor a certain saint or one or another practice of piety, but rather of a doctrinal cult by which we worship the Person of Jesus Christ, considered in His Heart and all that His Heart symbolizes.

It is not on the same level with any devotion, not even with devotion to the mother of God. It is the devotion of devotions. It is the devotion to the love of Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God.

about Catholic education in Northern Ireland.

This is a very serious matter and should be given immediate attention. All protests should be sent to Sir Nicholas Henderson, British Ambassador to the United States, British Embassy, Washington, D.C. 20008.

Dick Mullaney
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North Chili, N.Y. 14514

TV Show Sacrilegious

Editor:

Re: Dave Allen at Large (WXXI, 10 p.m., May 30). This was one of the most ignorant and sacrilegious episodes I have ever seen or heard — directed at God and religion in general, at the Catholic Church in particular. The Holy Father was maligned in the most disgraceful manner to the cheers of the audience (very likely canned cheers).

WXXI has a penchant for such trash as indicated by a former show: The Monty Python Flying Circus — now it's Dave Allen at Large. WXXI is distinctly British whence it derives the worst Britain has to offer. This in utter disregard for the support tendered from Catholic auspices. We are glibly told to turn off what we do not like. Rubbish! And let them debase our nation while we bury our heads? WXXI should be informed in the only language it knows — the pocketbook — that this is America — love it or leave it!

Edward A. Veith
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Every devotional practice approved by the Church is based on a doctrine, a dogma. For instance, the devotion of the rosary is based on the dogma of divine maternity; if Mary were not the mother of God, we would not be saying the rosary in her honor. So also, the practice of piety familiar to all devotees of the Sacred Heart such as the First Friday Communions of reparation, the Holy Hour, etc., based on a dogma, a revealed truth. What is that dogma? "God is love (1 John 4:16). This is the dogma that underlies all dogmas. Every practice of devotion toward the Heart of Jesus is nothing else than an expression of these truths: God is love. Jesus is God. Therefore, Jesus is love. He loves me. I want to love Him in return.

Mrs. Robert Leahy
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Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Troublesome Differences Part Two

Dear Father Hohman,

Just want to say your column on Troublesome Differences was terrific. Our whole family stands with you in your belief. When we classify people into certain groups, it's easy to build up walls of indifference. For example will the "Moral Majority" create the "Immoral Minority," so to speak? We sure hope not!

In fact we believe that just being a Christian today is a cop-out. Heck, Larry Flynt of Hustler Magazine professes Christianity. We ask ourselves, how do we learn moral values? How do we learn the truth so we may speak it? We believe that people belong to a faith

community. Whether it be Catholic, Methodist, Jewish, etc., let's all just grow together to become one people living the value of forgiveness. That's what we are all about.

(Signed) D.F.

Dear D.F.,

You have brought a new dimension into this discussion, an extremely important one. The Lord very obviously wanted his people to be gathered together into a faith community precisely to live the value of forgiveness of which you speak. He prayed so ardently that we might be one that this aspect cannot be left out of the total picture of Christianity. To live out our lives in relationship with Christ in isolation from other people is patently a contradiction. Thank you for your comments.

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