

Editorials

Odd Bedfellows

Question for our state legislators and anyone else willing to play the game: What do the Soviet Union, China, South Africa, Iran, Iraq, South Korea and the Philippines have in common? Repressive governments? Correct. But something else also — capital punishment.

Now, what do all the nations of free Europe (the West), except one, have in common? That's right — no death penalty.

France, which gave the world the guillotine, stands alone in Western Europe as a proponent of the death penalty. The United States, which we like to proclaim as the world's leading advocate of human rights, has chosen as allies in this issue Moscow, Peking, Teheran, rather than London, Rome and Bonn.

Please, New York State legislators, think about this.

Alfredo Rampi

Too often it takes tragedy to remind us of some fundamental facts. Perhaps that is the reason and necessity for calamity.

The recent, sad circumstances surrounding the demise in a hole in the ground of a 6-year-old Italian boy while the world watched helplessly provides several lessons.

First, the science that has taken us to the moon and beyond is often woefully lacking in more earthly crises.

Second, the world, that is the people thereof, so often described as bellicose, cold and callous, stopped to sob over little Alfredo Rampi. Ronald Reagan's budget cuts, nuclear saber-rattling and even the

baseball strike had to take media backseats as most of the population of the planet Earth waited, hoped, prayed and finally cried.

We the people cared. We hurt for a single life. We felt for his parents. The president of Italy dropped everything and went to the scene to kneel and try to talk to Alfredo entrapped 200 feet deep in earth's womb. Those who saw that scene broadcast live over Cable News Network will not soon forget it.

Hardly a heart did not pay homage to the value of that single, far-off life. In the name of Alfredo Rampi, we should apply the inherent lesson to all the life-and-death issues we face.

And we earthlings should realize that perhaps we are not all that bad if we can still suffer so much for one, helpless stranger.

and Opinions

CHD Thanks Diocesans

Editor:

I wish to thank the people of the Diocese of Rochester for their continuing and generous support of the Campaign for Human Development. Recently a check for \$77,255 was received here at the national office. This amount is the three-quarters portion to be distributed nationally. This year 663 funding proposals requesting \$41 million have been received. These are now being reviewed and prioritized by national staff, the CHD diocesan directors, and the CHD National Committee of 40 people representing all geographic regions and the ethnic-racial makeup of the United States. Last year, we had about \$6 million to fund some 146 self-help projects.

CHD is not a "handout," but rather provides a way out of the vicious cycle of poverty through seed money for self-help projects. Of every dollar received by the National CHD, 96 cents actually gets out to these self-help projects.

Since 1970, the Diocese of Rochester has received 22 national CHD grants totaling \$599,600 for a return of 78 percent.

The continued generosity of the people of your diocese fulfills the spirit of the words of Pope John Paul II:

"Only a socially just society, one that strives to be evermore just, has reason to exist. Only such a society has a future ahead of it."

"Every society ought to establish a just social order unless it wishes to be destroyed from within."

CHD is designed to foster those institutional changes which will help to bring about the kind of society recommended by the Holy Father.

CHD provides an opportunity for us to live as Jesus did, in solidarity with the poor, the wounded, the marginalized and those considered "least" in our society.

On behalf of the entire CHD family, I express sincere thanks also to Bishop Matthew Clark and to Ms. Francine M. Patella, your diocesan director.

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Editor's Note: Elsewhere in this edition is a story reporting that the diocesan CHD has distributed \$25,000 to seven local self-help projects.

DSC Commends Mercy Sisters

Editor:

We would like to take the opportunity to publicly

congratulate the Religious Sisters of Mercy serving in the Rochester diocese on the 150th anniversary of their founding.

We note with gratitude, also, that June 9 commemorated the beginning of their 125 years of service to the people of our diocese. We say thank you to all of the Sisters of Mercy for their dedication and commitment to the life of the diocese, and we offer our support, prayers and good wishes to them.

Sisters Council
Diocese of Rochester

Rights Law Abandoned

Editor:

Last year legislation was enacted (HR 9400; S.10) that empowers the U.S. Attorney General's Office to initiate lawsuits to protect the civil rights of institutionalized citizens. Congressman Robert Kastenmeier said this action was warranted "because the states have been sadly slow to improve institutional conditions" and because of a federal court ruling that lacking statutory authority, the Attorney General cannot initiate such actions.

But on May 27, Attorney General William French Smith announced that the Justice Department will abandon what Smith calls "a massive intrusion into state and local prison management" and the imposition of "a predetermined set of minimum standards as the uncompromisable norm for the many varying conditions in state and local prisons and jails."

So much for my hope that the Justice Department could be involved in upgrading Attica Correctional Facility! (I described Attica's problems in my May 13 C-J letter.)

Beyond this, Smith's announcement suggests that S.10 will not be applied to penal institutions. A similar policy on mental, geriatric and juvenile facilities appears inevitable.

In recent months, there have been enough publicized cases of institutional abuse to point out that the situations which prompted Congress to strengthen the Justice Department's ability to take corrective actions still exist.

The department's new policy is an abandonment of those most in need of the protection the Attorney General is to provide.

Supporters of this important civil rights law should now insist that it be enforced.

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Priest Defends Death Penalty

Editor:

Regarding capital punishment, two points never seem to be mentioned: 1. It was through the death penalty that the world was redeemed. Through the death of Jesus on the cross, God seems to have accepted and, as it were, approved, the death penalty as an atonement for sin. 2. The convicted murderer is a threat to the lives of other people even when in prison; he is a threat to the prison guards, to hostages taken in the course of a prison riot, to other

prisoners, and to the general public if he is able to escape. The convicted murderer has nothing to lose by a second murder.

Then there is the controversy over the possibility of the ordination of women to the priesthood. The Church teaches very explicitly that women never can be ordained to the priesthood. However, when Catholic writers try to explain the reason for this teaching, they never seem to be able to find the reason which is both basic and fundamental. It is this: God is a father because he gives life. The concept of all fatherhood comes from God, says St. Paul. A mother receives life from the father, nurtures it, and brings it to completion. But she is never a father. Jesus came into this life as a man because he, too, gives life of himself through Holy Mother the Church. The Apostles were to be other Christs.

They, too, were to give life through Holy Mother the Church. There were to be other Christs. They were to be fathers. A woman could never be regarded as a father, another Christ. That is why there were no women among the Apostles.

Mary the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven holds the highest place in Heaven — but she never was ordained a priest, another Christ. Hence, personal holiness is not the issue in the matter of the ordination of women to the priesthood. IT IS FATHERHOOD. A woman could never be considered a father. Hence, Jesus chose only men for his Apostles. The Catholic priest has the title of "Father" — one who gives life.

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Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

To Earn A '10' Rating

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 10:37-42. (R1) 2 Kgs. 4:8-11. (R2) Rom. 6:3-4, 8-11.

Have you noticed in the past few years, there's been an epidemic of tens. The ten best books, the ten top records, the ten best this and the ten best that. Then there's the rating scale of 1 to 10. Even a movie titled "10," where a woman is the physical embodiment of perfection, registering a perfect "10" (morally, she was closer to "1"). But 1 to 10 seems to be the new standard of measurement. Maybe it is the metric system which bases weights and measures on "10."

Still, this phenomenon isn't really that new. Ten good men could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was tested by God on ten different occasions. There were ten plagues that freed from slavery, and the Ten Commandments that advance the cause of a perfect society.

Of course Jesus didn't specifically use the ten system. However, He did set

forth in Sunday's gospel the requirement for being a "10" disciple. "Whoever loves father or mother, sister or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me. He who will not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me." That calls for total commitment. A number 10.

How many churchgoers have you heard say, "I'm a good Catholic — no worse than my neighbor; at least as good, if not better"? How often have we heard jokes about the lukewarmness of many "catholics"? There is the one about 3-sprinkled "catholics": those sprinkled with water at baptism, with rice at marriage, and with dust at death. Or those "catholics" who come to church only when they are "hatched, matched, or dispatched."

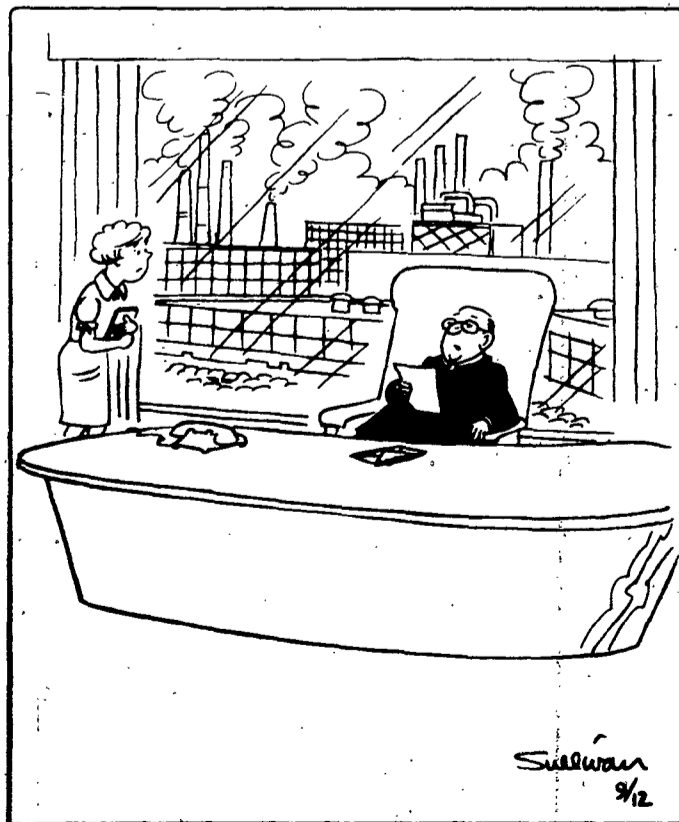
I heard an Episcopalian minister, Father Charles Irish, say of his parish in Ohio that his congregation were very good church people, but not one of them knew Jesus Christ — really knew Him! He said they believed to the limit of their understanding, but they just didn't understand anything. He also charged that our churches are impoverished, spiritual slums, because our people do not know Jesus. Good church people, poor

Christians! Wow! That's devastating!

Yet listen to what Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati said in his farewell address as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 1977: He expressed concern about the large number of Catholics "who have never experienced true conversion, whose understanding of what the Catholic faith really means and the demands it makes is minimal." He went on to say, "The most important task of a bishop is to proclaim Christ Jesus and His Good News in such a way as to elicit a deep, personal commitment to Him and acceptance of His message."

A few years back, when I was in the hospital, my nephew brought me some light reading. He knew my love for football, so he brought me Jerry Kramer's "Instant Replay." Jerry Kramer was guard for the Green Bay Packers when coached by the legendary Vince Lombardi. He remembers Vince telling his backs one day: "This is a game of abandon. You run with complete abandon. You care nothing for anybody or anything, and when you get close to the goal line, your abandon intensifies. Nothing, not a tank, nor a wall, no eleven shall stop you from getting across that goal line."

It is this kind of abandon Jesus demands of us — the "let us do or die" of Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn!



"WELL, MISS FINCH, THE BOYS INVOLVED IN POLITICS GOT IT. I SUPPOSE I HAD TO EXPECT THIS SOONER OR LATER."

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