

Editorials

Neutron Bomb

Only a fool would underestimate the problems facing world leaders in these times pervaded by the ominous sense of nuclear destruction amidst constantly aggravating interface of competing powers. Nuclear capabilities are not only increasing in depth of knowledge but also expanding laterally even to unstable nations.

Only a fool could ignore the obvious bellicosity of the Soviet Union which, when yoked with its disregard of human rights and its international ambition, forms a fearsome troika.

Only a fool would hastily condemn President Reagan's decision to produce the neutron bomb, especially with less than the full portfolio of facts.

Clearly, there is argument on the side of the neutron bomb.

Those opposed to the decision also have solid and persuasive logic. For instance, isn't it an affront to humankind to endorse a weapon that is designed to kill people while preserving property?

It also is questionable that the neutron bomb is indeed a deterrent to war.

It also is abrasive to the sensitivities of our Western Allies who feel they should have been consulted before the decision, because eventually, it seems clear, the neutron bomb must be deployed on their soil.

It already has been divisive in our own halls of government where no less than Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. warned against shoving the neutron bomb down the throats of our friends.

Cost is an inescapable factor. While this administration is intent on cutting back the price of a

wide range of human services, how can this obviously astronomically-priced weapon (cost still uncertain) be countenanced?

And one of the biggest arguments against the neutron bomb is the question of its deterrence when the Soviet Union immediately announced that it, too, would produce the N-bomb, as could be predicted by any grade-schooler. Thus the cycle of madness continues and escalates.

Thus, on pragmatic ground, the arguments are complicated and decision difficult. But for Roman Catholics, particularly those with magisterial respect, the choice is obvious, though not painless.

All of our recent popes as well as the Second Vatican Council provide clear and unambiguous guidance.

To wit, Vatican Council, Gaudium et Spes:

"The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts on the poor is more than can be endured. And there is every reason to fear that if it continues it will bring forth those lethal disasters already in preparation..."

To wit, Pope Paul VI, Progress of Peoples:

"Countries squander cash to boost their pride while millions starve. The money spent on arms is scandalous while schools and homes and hospitals remain unbuilt. Let those responsible for such grave scandals hear what we say before it is too late."

To wit, Pope John XXIII, Peace on Earth:

"It is with deep sorrow that we note the enormous stocks of armaments that have been and still are being made in more economically developed countries, with a vast outlay of intellectual and economic resources..."

"The production of arms is allegedly justified on the grounds that in present-day conditions peace cannot be

preserved without an equal balance of armaments. And so, if one country increases its armaments, others feel the need to do the same; and if one country is equipped with nuclear weapons, other countries must produce their own, equally destructive..."

"Justice, right reason and humanity urgently demand that the arms race should cease, that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned, that nuclear weapons should be banned and that a general agreement should be eventually reached about progressive disarmament and an effective method of control."

To wit, Pope John Paul II, 1980 World Day of Peace Message:

"I cannot fail to say a word about the arms race. The situation in which humanity is living today seems to include a tragic contradiction between the many fervent declarations in favor of peace and the no less less vertiginous escalation in weaponry. The very existence of the arms race can even cast a suspicion of falsehood and hypocrisy on certain declarations of the desire for peaceful coexistence. What is worse, it can often even justify the impression that such declarations serve only as a cloak for opposite intentions."

These great men of the 20th Century have translated the message of Jesus Christ for infusion in our modern lives; they should not be ignored.

In that context, one cannot validly support such enormously expensive weaponry without endorsing the deprivation of succor for the least of our brothers — there is a direct tie-in which we will explore in future editorials.

Paramount for Roman Catholics are some of Christ's greatest teachings. They must not be ignored, particularly by those who would follow in His footsteps.

and Opinions

Youth Need Support

Editor:

I read with interest a letter by Shirley Toole in the Courier-Journal (7/22/81). I was pleased to hear that some funding had been allocated to Youth Ministry in spite of the DPC recommendation to the contrary.

I do, however, take exception to some of Shirley Toole's statements.

1. She quoted a total of \$19 million of which \$11.5 million goes toward elementary schools.

2. The \$6 million spent so well by the nine high schools in providing a quality total education to their students is directed only to something less than 20 percent of the teens in the diocese.

3. Of the \$1.57 million spent on Parish Religious Education Programs, the major part is spent on elementary programs. In fact, there are many parishes in our diocese that have NO high school programs.

4. Institutional Education, as good as it is for those attending, is only one dimension of total youth ministry.

5. While it is true that the diocesan budget includes \$402,824 for youth programs, the majority of that is in the Division of Education where "youth" is defined to include elementary age children. There are very few strictly teenage directed services.

6. I offer the issue of the approximately 80 percent of teenagers (youth) in the diocese who are not a part of the Catholic Educational framework. I am concerned

that youth have spiritual, social and physical needs as well as the need for mental development. I am concerned about the disinterested as well as those who might be called minimalists in terms of their connection with the Church. Often these young people turn to others for responses and answers that we can or should provide. The real issue is the need to deliver the services of total Catholic Youth Ministry to as many of the teenage youth of our diocese as possible.

I do not object to or criticize the millions of dollars being spent on Parochial Education at the elementary and secondary levels, and in Parish Religious Education Programs. (I am a product of the parochial schools myself.) Rather, I raise the point that there is more to Youth Ministry than education. There is more to youth than those who attend parochial schools. There is more to ministry than maintaining what we have.

I believe that we must be concerned with finding ways of responding to all of the teens of our Church. We have to search out ways to see that funds become available to new and additional ways of reaching God's people regardless of age or personal choice of education institution.

If we are looking to youth as the hope of the future we need to be conscious of the needs of today. If we are seeking to build a people of God we must respond to the members of today. If we are concerned with the total person and the total population we had better find the means to develop, design and financially support programs which deal with the total "youth" person of today. Otherwise the life we have failed to respond to today may

not be there to touch us tomorrow.

Patrick B. Fox
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Editor:

Re: Father Dave Mura's letter (CJ 7/8/81) and James M. Clark's letter (CJ 7/29/81).

Having recently converted to Catholicism, I am discouraged by the incredible disrespect and nearly total lack of support, both financial and spiritual, that the Catholic Church is displaying toward its teenagers. We are told that many millions of dollars are being spent for the youth of the Catholic Church, but these monies actually go to school budgets, with only a few pennies, if any, being allocated to Parish Teen Ministry Programs!

Do we really think that our parochial schools and CCD programs, as good as they are, are really serving ALL of today's teenagers? What about those teenagers who live too far away, who can't afford to go, or whose parish does not have these schools or programs? Why is it that so many Parish Councils are so unwilling to provide the monies needed for Youth Ministry? Why is it that so many parishes do not support teenage activities that could be coordinated with a youth Mass? It is no wonder that our teenagers have become disenchanted with the Catholic Church when all they hear is, "You have to go to Mass on Sunday," and "You have to go to CCD," while so many of their Protestant friends are often enjoying church activities available to them over and above their Sunday obligations.

Our teenagers are parishioners today and if they are still to be parishioners tomorrow, the Catholic

Church and Parish Councils had better start caring and loving them now — or tomorrow's Mass will be in an empty church!

Charlie Atterbury
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Mother Teresa Must Speak Out

Editor:

What would we think of a German woman who, during World War II, had lovingly relieved the sufferings of injured German soldiers as well as those of relatives of the ones who died in battle? Most likely we would consider her to be a woman of charity and compassion. If through her activities she should have become a public figure held in highest esteem not only in Germany but throughout the world, then certain responsibilities would have fallen on her shoulders, such as speaking out against the gas chambers. This is because as a public figure she would have become a teacher, teaching by both words and actions.

Should such a woman have spoken out against concentration camps and genocide? We would say "yes," but a devout follower of the fuhrer would say "no." He would probably tell us that this loving woman followed in the footsteps of Christ, is for that reason being persecuted, and that bringing in the subject of gas chambers are simply "slings and arrows of little people trying to gain stature by attacking monumental achievers." This is quoting your editorial on Mother Teresa.

Unless we choose to be devout and faithful followers of our curial fuhrers in Rome, I believe we should seriously consider the "diminutive" thinking of Rev. Jennings. Let us therefore not only give due credit and praise to Mother Teresa, but even imitate her who so truly follows Christ by laying down her very life for

her friends. Let us then also be open and ready to admit that as a public figure she has failed to speak out against the oppression by the Roman hierarchy, and let us not imitate her silence. If the world's Roman Catholic women, some 300 million, are denied access to the priesthood and therefore equality before God, then this is clearly a problem which our loving and compassionate Mother Teresa should not be afraid to tackle.

Paul W. Harper
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Do Feminists Have a Case?

Editor:

Re women's ordination. Is the Holy Father a male chauvinist?

A small group of women in the Catholic Church today would like us to think so. Do they really have a case?

Would Jesus choose women apostles if he were here today? Was he afraid to break tradition? The only way to find out is to look at the record and read what he said and did. Didn't he look at the Pharisees straight in the eye and call them hypocrites? Didn't he forgive the woman caught in adultery, instead of throwing stones, as the law required? Didn't he eat with sinners and visit their homes? And what about his apostles: didn't he allow them to break the Sabbath? It is clear that Jesus was just not a traditionalist. So, why didn't he choose six men and six women? The answer must be with God the Father. Whom did he choose? Abraham, Moses, Elias — need I say more? Jesus said that he came to do the will of his Father and that's what he did. If anyone has a gripe, I guess it's with God the Father.

This small group of women know they have a problem. Now they are seeking to get rid of sexist language in the

liturgy. They want the word "men" stricken from the record. The new word is "person." Think of it — "OUR PERSON WHO ART IN HEAVEN!"

Certainly there is a role for both men and women in the Church. They are different and both important. The Church has expanded the role of women, so let's do the real job of bringing Christ to this sick and troubled world. We can start with the thousands of Catholics who have lost their faith because of the recent, so-called "period of enlightenment." Degrees, titles and position are all good, but when our self-importance is increasing, while His is decreasing, we are going the WRONG way. St. John the Baptist said it the way it must be: "I must decrease so He will increase."

We can all learn a lesson from St. John.

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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 1½ 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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