

Editorials

Endangered Sect

Don McEvoy, senior vice president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, refers to it as "the Bahai genocide."

And if ever there was clear argument for the necessity for separation of Church and state, the present regime in Iran provides it. Not only does the Ayatollah Khomeini and his cohorts use a swift sword to cut down political opponents, they utilize it with equal alacrity against perceived religious enemies.

Members of the Bahai faith (and incidentally there are some in our own diocese) believe that the founders of all the great religions brought manifestations of God who is known in a series of progressive revelations. The Bahais believe these manifestations are ongoing. According to McEvoy, world brotherhood is basic to their teaching; the religion is devoted to the abolition of race, class and religious prejudices.

The Bahais are also the largest religious minority in Iran which by itself endangers them in a nation run by paranoid fanatics. The Muslim fundamentalists running the government hold that there can be no more prophets after Muhammed and if anyone believes otherwise it is an offense worthy of death.

But the Bahais have other faults in the extremists' eyes. The Bahais have a traditional friendship with Judaism and they insist on the equality of women.

Because of all this, the Bahais, according to McEvoy, have been denounced as enemies of the Muslim state, have been fired from positions in universities, the government and the military and have been subjected to personal and economic harassment, including execution. The Iranian supreme court has outlawed the teaching of the Bahai faith.

World opinion must be brought to bear on the Iranian extremists who stand front and center with any of the present national governments who deal in religious persecution.

Funny Business

Back in August, we wondered editorially whether some people in Saco, Maine, who were planning an all-Christian telephone business telephone directory would accept the names of Joseph and Son, Jewish carpenters.

Now comes word from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith that it has won a court fight against a similar outfit in California. The publisher of California Christian Yellow Pages which limited advertisers to "born again" Christians has signed a court-approved agreement to cease the discriminatory practice.

The agreement was reached in settlement of a suit brought against the directory by two Jewish businessmen (not Joseph and Son) whose ads were refused. Not only must Christian Yellow Pages cease its bias, it also has to pay the two men \$1,500 damages.

The case took four years. But the precedent is important because it may apply in other regions, perhaps in Saco, Maine.

and Opinions

United Way Suggestion

Editor:

As a vocal representative in this area for the unborn babies who are being slaughtered by abortion, I feel I should write concerning the United Way drive in Seneca and surrounding counties.

Unfortunately, United Way last year accepted Planned Parenthood among its list of "good" agencies. PP not only counsels minors and schedules them for abortions locally, but on the national, state and local levels, lobbies in favor of killing unborn children. PP even runs an abortion chamber in Syracuse which kills more than 1,500 babies annually.

Whenever there is a pro-abortion rally or pro-abortion testimony in Albany or Washington, I read about people employed by the local PP who are there during a working day fighting for abortion. How can good pro-life people support this type of activity through their donations?

As a very active Girl Scout leader, I realize that United Way gives a good share of their money to this agency. But how can I, and hopefully others in good conscience, give support United Way when it supports Planned Parenthood which exterminates unborn babies?

I would urge that if you feel pressured at work to give, to give the minimum and to designate that your donation NOT go to Planned Parenthood which locally gets a quarter million of our tax dollars to operate. We have little control over our tax dollars, but we can control our donations.

Kathy Peters
17 Huff St.
Waterloo, N.Y. 13165

Parents Unit Needs Help

Editor:

The budget cutbacks are making it necessary for social agencies to use more volunteers than ever before. Just because money is not allocated for necessary social issues does not mean that these problems don't exist.

Child abuse exists in Monroe County and Parents Anonymous is continuing to do something about it. Parents Anonymous has been proven one of the most effective programs in stopping and preventing child abuse. And, to operate, we need more volunteers.

Anyone concerned about the problem who would like to give a few hours a week to do something about it can become a Parents Anonymous volunteer. Challenging opportunities exist in such areas as hotline counseling, child care, public relations, transportation and office support. Leadership positions are available. Sponsors are needed to facilitate parent support group meetings and we need volunteers to staff the state 24-hour hotline. Training and supervision are provided. For more information, the number is 454-5060.

Kathy Martin
Training Specialist
Parents Anonymous
121 N. Fitzhugh St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14614

Hospital Is Thanked

Editor:

The Board of Directors and officers of Natural Family Planning Education of Rochester wish publicly to thank St. Mary's Hospital for its support and assistance to us. We are especially grateful to Sister Ann William, administrator, and to Sister Helen Edward Dodd, who serves on our board. They have been most generous in providing us with services and facilities. Recognizing the true value of the knowledge made available to couples in this community, they have done a great deal to enhance and assist with our work.

While asking nothing in return and expecting no public acknowledgement, St. Mary's has earned our gratitude. We feel the community should be aware of their generosity and leadership in this important work.

Richard T. O'Hara
President
Natural Family Planning
Kearney Building
Genee St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14611

Mixed Emotions

Editor:

Every Wednesday when the Courier arrives, two reactions are present inside me: "Oh, boy, the Courier's here!" and, "Oh, no, it's indigestion time!"

Yes, I am a young, single Catholic who does read the Courier — hence the "Oh, boy!" However, the indigestion creeps up in two areas of the paper.

The first is the Opinion Page. Quite simply, both the progressive and conservative voices annoy me with their "rah, rah, rah" rhetoric. Two well-written, logically-written narratives a week would serve the Catholics of Rochester more than the present page of mud-slinging. No, not all Courier letters are spiritually motivated.

Secondly, the series "Our Catholic Heritage" is a big disappointment. It reminds me of an off-Broadway musical: we'll be alright as long as we get to the next song — or the next quotation, as it were. I was expecting 2,000-2,500 words of text a week that flowed like a history book. Instead, it looks similar to the plagiarisms of college undergrads.

My gastrointestinal distress, in short, focuses on the misuse of quotations. You don't just take great Church masterpieces, cut off bits to chew on, and then say, "See, I'm right and you're wrong."

Frankly, I'd rather say just, "Oh, boy!" and head for the easy chair.

Rich Agnello
1060 Lake Road
Webster, N.Y. 14580

Weeds Have Their Place

Editor:

As you look about Rochester's Indian summer you notice the great variety of colors and shapes that make Fall so beautiful. Nature's plan has always been this way; variety is the key to nature's delicate balance. So when we decide to get rid of "weeds" with highly toxic chemicals we are making a mistake. If the

weeds must go, we can use non-chemical methods — get rid of them manually or mechanically.

In wild places, weeds serve as food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Toxic chemicals do immeasurable damage to wildlife, including useful insects such as bees. I'd like to quote Gerard Manley Hopkins:

"What would the world be once bereft of wet and wildness? Let them be left, O let them be left, wildness and wet. Long live the weeds and the wildness yet."

Mary R. Crowe
1600 East Ave.
Apt. 905
Rochester, N.Y. 14610

Editor's Note: Reader Crowe's letter brings to mind Ralph Waldo Emerson — "And what is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered."

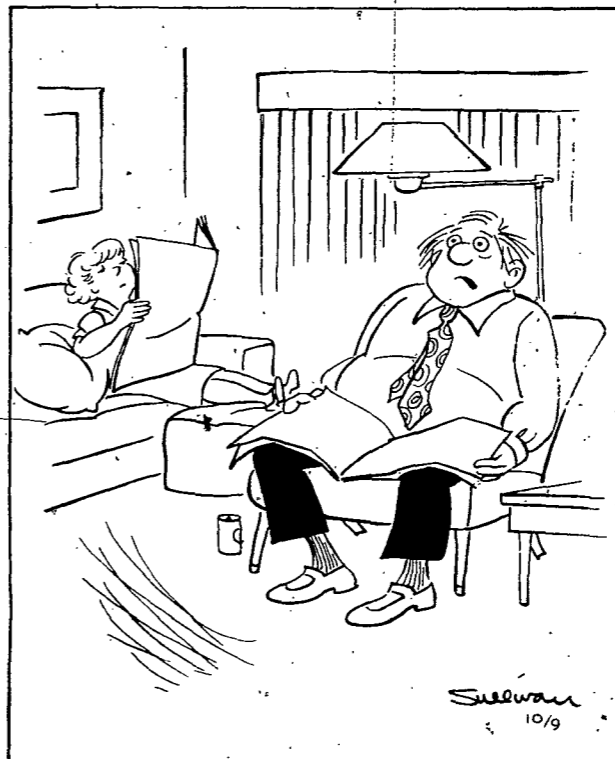
Column Seen Damaging

Editor:

Having just finished reading the Oct. 21 issue of the Courier-Journal, I am compelled to respond to Father Paul J. Cuddy's article on active women religious. I feel bound to uphold the dignity of women who have been called to that particular Church role. In faith and love, they give their energy and gifts to a Church that historically and presently treats them in a chauvinistic and patronizing fashion. It is in justified anger and dismay that I witness this in a Church that professedly embraces all people. How blessed it is to know that Jesus encouraged and loved the gifts of women!

It is humiliating to all of us and the Church's loss that women religious are tolerated and not embraced. Father Cuddy's article may well be indicative of a general attitude; it would certainly not be a far-flung conjecture. We are called repeatedly by St. Paul to encourage and enliven each other in our journeys as Christians. I find this article damaging and judgmental of the Lord's particular calling of so many obviously dedicated women.

I am a laywoman presently committed to working at Melita House,



"IT TOOK ME YEARS TO GET OVER THE FEAR OF GOD, MARGE, AND NOW I'M STARTING TO HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM WITH REAGAN."

one of the three Catholic Worker houses of hospitality in Rochester. My previous experiences for the last four years have been working at Bethany and St. Joseph's House. During this time, I have had the inestimable privilege and opportunity of working along side people of enduring faith and dedication to gospel values. Laywomen and men, Sisters and priests have unconditionally given to these houses and to those in need. Their implied and active challenge to today's values have encouraged and enabled others to join, in varying degrees, the Catholic Worker movement.

Presently there are laywomen staffing Bethany

and Melita. Ultimately, it is a minor correction; however, I feel that Father Cuddy ought to be aware of the value of lay ministry. It is often as unacknowledged as the ministry of those in religious life is. St. Paul states that there is one Body, yet many members, many parts, all equal in worth and function. I would hope that Father Cuddy reflect on that and rethink his article. We are called to build each other up in our particular vocations. What is significant is that we are true to ourselves and the Lord, living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Jean Jesserer
Melita House
123 Evergreen St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14605

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.