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Editorials

What Happened To Tuition Aid?

Amid the anguished reaction to President Reagan's continuing budget cuts affecting services to the needy. another extremely important and just proposal has almost unnoticeably approached a crucial stage tuition tax credits. And we have reason to wonder if the president is hoodwinking Catholics on this con-

To put the issue in perspective, our previous First Man, Jimmy Carter, promised, if elected, to find "a constitutionally accepted method of providing tax aid for the education of all pupils." Needless to say, he not only failed in his search but also managed along the way to threaten a veto of the Moynihan-Packwood bill which would have provided just such tax aid. The bill never passed the Congress, so he saved his veto.

Seizing on the issue, and at the time it seemed genuinely, campaigner Ronald Reagan promised, if elected, to press for tuition tax credits. The fact that he reiterated such intention in his first speech to Congress moved one U.S. Catholic Conference official to declare that the credits "are on the front burner."

If he took the bait too quickly, consider the plight of Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia who, just one week before election day, blasted President Carter publicly for reneging on his promise to do something about

Or take Msgr. John Meyers, president of the Catholic Education Association, who wrote President Carter and threatened that "if the Democratic Party continues to thwart or ignore Catholic concerns, the loyalties of this constituency must be directed elsewhere." We hope he saved the letter; with minor alterations, it could be sent to the incumbent president.

But we must not be harsh with such positions. Ronald Reagan continued to pledge his troth while at the same time the issue retreated to less auspicious locations of the cooking apparatus than in the foreground.

Thus, in anticipation of the recently released budget for the 1983 fiscal year, Catholic officials had a watchdog plan — even if the president again promised his support for the credits, unless there was a line item for it in the budget, his words would be judged as no more than lip service. Imagine the chagrin when in his budget message, not only was there not a line item, there was not even a line of support. Two days later, in an amended version, the President did repeat his earlier commitment which, if it once seemed deep, now seems shallow at best.

"Later in the year," he wrote, "the administration will transmit to the Congress a plan to implement a program of tax credits for families of tuition-paying students."

Even if he finally does get around to such a plan, and even if it is accepted by the Congress, the aid has been effectively been set back several years.

Far from the front burner.

Insiders also feel that the only reason he added that single, lukewarm sentence was due to "pressure" which would mean that the president's resolve has thinned, again to say the least.

We understand that many of the budget cuts are more severe because they slash at the life-blood of many citizens. But that should not lessen the concern over tuition tax credits — for two reasons. Tution tax credits are a matter of justice and when that is thwarted, particularly by a nation's rulers, then we are all in peril. More obviously, when candidates go on the record with words and flowers to bolster their heated promises, then later sidestep such commitment, it damages their integrity not only on that one concern but on all the other issues.

One education official said just before the budget was announced, "Tax credits are at a critical stage." Under President Reagan's scalpel, we feel, they may already have been amputated.

and Opinions

'Marriage Alive' Set Feb. 27

Editor:

Through the efforts of the Family Life Office, Bishop Clark and the State Catholic Conference, my husband and were honored to represent diocesans as appointed delegates to the White House Conference on Families. During the conference, many concerns about the plight of American families were

voiced. The rising divorce rate, battered wives and children, drug abuse — the list goes on and on. Proposals were made to ask the federal government to grant tax incentives to the public sector and private institutions to promote programs which would address these concerns. Ultimately, because less government rather than more was the desire of the majority of the delegates, many of these concerns were either not addressed at all or were voted down. Now, as members of the resource community,



THE NEW PASTOR AT ST. HILARY'S IS TRYING TO ROUND UP FOLKS WHO HAVEN'T BEEN TO CHURCH FOR AWHILE."

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 S., 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

Family Life Office, we are aware that many of these concerns are being addressed to our Church. The problem seems to be in making the public aware of what is available, and then comes the hard part — convincing the public that they do indeed need help.

If we are to help our

families to maintain lasting, loving relationships in the face of job stress, drugs in schools and all the other pressures put on parents and marriage partners by the permissive society, parents must admit that they need help. Husbands and wives are more apt to seek help when something goes wrong with their children. We accept this as our responsibility and make the time and effort to do something about the problem. However, it's much more difficult to convince them that if they would take the time and make the effort to enrich their own marriage relationship and communications improve between themselves, many of the problems with the children could be avoided through early intervention and better communication between parents and child.

Why not try a marriage enrichment program called "Marriage Alive"? It will be presented at the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, red. 27. Cost is \$3 a couple. Participants should bring their own lunch and beverage. Coffee and a soda machine are available. Anyone planning on making it should call Jim and Lita Gillette at (716) 637-2747 by

> Jim and Lita Gilletté 106 Laura Drivê Brockport, N.Y. 14420

Disarming Must Be Bilateral

Editor: The Feb. 3.C. I featured a front page article headlined "Nuclear Fission," which detailed the opinion differences among area clergy concerning the apparent storage of nuclear arms at the Seneca Army Depot. The article stated that because of nuclear protests (as well as, presumably, other controversies not cited in the article), many priests no longer look to bishops for

guidance, but directly to the pope instead. This statement was followed by the remark, apparently aimed at such priests, that three of the last four popes have condemned the arms race. The obvious implication is that priests looking to the pope will find him no different from the bishops, at least on the arms

It has been my observation, however, that papal statements on armaments have been taken out of context and used in politically tendentious ways by the antinuclear activists. Contrary to the apparent point of the C-J article cited, actual papal statements are not in harwith the activists' position. Beneath the media mirage, the present pope has not asked for unilateral western disarmament, as many clergy would have it. Nor to my knowledge did any previous pope so ask.

What Pope John Paul II has called for (as he was quoted in the National Review, 1-22-82) is immediate reduction and ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons undertaken simultaneously by all parties through specific agreements" (emphasis mine). He has also called for "efficient control on the disarmament agreements; controls meaning, of course, a way for the world community to monitor obedience to the agreements cited. The pope obviously does not suffer from the same political illusions, regarding the trustworthiness of a certain world power, as do many American clergy. In fact, the papal position is much closer to that of political conservatives than to that of disarmament activists and could easily be endorsed by Mr. Reagan himself.

I do not understand the motives of those who would align the Church with the unilateral disarmament position. I suspect that many are attracted to the excitement of a trendy crusade. They prefer easy popularity to difficult truth. They seem concerned with "respect of persons," a trait soundly condemned by Scripture. Other are perhaps just frightened (understandably) at

Educational Programs On Hatch Amendment

Feb. 21 — St. Patrick's, Corning, 10:45 a.m.

Feb. 28 — St. Patrick's, Corning, 10:45 a.m.

March 1 — St. Vincent's, Corning, 7:30 p.m.

March 1 — St. Agnes, Avon, 8 p.m.

March 14 - St. Mary's, Ontario, 7:30 p.m.

the thought of nuclear holocaust.

We might note the true Christian concern for life is not to be confused with secular concern for mere "lifestyle," the fear of losing which is a major underpinning of many secular causes passing for moral ones. (We might also note that for countless unborn children — 4,000 a day in the U.S. alone - the holocaust is already here.) Basically, I suspect, the loss of political perspective by clergy is just another result of the contemporary dilution of the

> William M. Marceau 108 Rossiter Road Rochester, N.Y. 14620

Defensive Arms Okay

Editor:

In John Dash's article on the Seneca Depot he states that three of the last pontiffs condemned the arms race. While this is true, it must not be interpreted to mean the pontiffs condemned selfdefense, Pope Paul VI told the U.N. in 1965: "No more war. But so long as man remains the weak, changeable and ever-wicked being that he so often shows himself to be, defense arms will, alas, be necessary." Pope John Paul II updated that sentiment on Dec. 21, 1981, saying: "Christians, even as they strive to resist and prevent every form of warfare, have no hesitation in recalling that in the name of an elementary requirement of justice, peoples have a right and even a duty to protest their existence and freedom by proportionate means against an unjust aggressor." The teaching,

then, savs that defense arms

are not simply allowed, but necessary.

The most effective defense for peace is prayer (especially the rosary) and sacrifice. Look at the results it brought in stopping abortions at a local

> Margaret Finucane 284 Canterbury Road Rochester, N.Y.

Don't Train Salvadorans

Editor:

The members of St. Human Stephen's Development Committee are opposed to the training of 1,500 Salvadoran soldiers in the United States. This \$18 million program and the recently allocated \$55 million in military aid further escalates U.S. military in-tervention in El Salvador. We believe that military intervention in El Salvador would be a tragic mistake for both El Salvador and our own country. We support a negotiated settlement in this struggle and urge that the U.S. lend its support to a peaceful solution.

We urge citizens to express themselves on this important matter by calling the White House Message Office 1-202-456-7639, or by writing to President Reagan, their senators and congressmen.

Pat Schofield For the Human Development Committee St. Stephen's Church 48 Pulteney St. Geneva, N.Y. 14456

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