

Editorials

Is It Christian To Fry People?

The language is blunt. But it is difficult to be gentle when discussing capital punishment.

Law professor James D. Barker of Duke University, appearing before a House subcommittee studying the death penalty, responded to those from the New Right who find justification for capital punishment in the Bible.

Speaking on behalf of Amnesty International, he said: "The Bible can be rung like chimes, a number of different ways. But don't let anybody sit here in this chair and tell you there is anything Christian about frying someone to death."

Religious News Service reported that at the same hearings, Msgr. Francis J. Lally, on behalf of the U.S.

Catholic Conference, said that American bishops are troubled by "the weakening of concern for the sanctity of life in our society" and that this degeneration was observable in the "growing advocacy" for the death penalty.

Of course, he said, concern over violent crime is understandable but what is needed are "effective measures to prevent crime and assure a swift and certain response to criminal acts . . . without resorting to such simplistic procedures as capital punishment."

Catholics have been offered sound and clear leadership on this subject but many still endorse killing as answer to killing. The arguments are familiar, and perhaps overworked, yet many can not understand that accepting death as a social remedy in one area weakens opposition to it in other issues. It is contradictory for someone to declare himself pro-life and then urge the death penalty.

The bishops of the nation's four major sees, in a joint statement, declared that the death penalty "no longer can be seen as a valid form of punishment for serious crimes."

That kind of opposition is consistent with that of other major religious bodies — Jewish, Protestant and Orthodox Christian. They see capital punishment as a contradiction of religious values.

Yet, according to Religious News Service, endorsement of the death penalty continues to grow among the populace. This, as in this case of abortion, does not make it just.

Let Me at 'em

Isn't it uplifting to listen to Prime Minister Thatcher and Gen. Galtieri both boasting proudly, "I won't give an inch!" What they really mean is that hundreds of young men under their leadership won't give an inch. They will, however, give their blood and lives.

Perhaps it would be meaningful if Thatcher and Galtieri would keep their young men at home and they themselves would meet headon to test their individual courage. Ridiculous? Is it really? Think about it.

and Opinions

Thanks Diocese For Support

Editor:

Today, June 9, 1982, marks the 125th anniversary of the coming of the first Sisters of Mercy to Rochester. These first six sisters traveled from Providence to begin this new foundation at old St. Mary's on South Street. The works of mercy began immediately with visitations, care of the sick, a house of mercy for needy women, elementary and secondary school education, an employment bureau, jail visitation and catechetical work. Our roots, which first found nourishment in Dublin, Ireland, then Pittsburgh and Providence, have now taken firm hold in the Diocese of Rochester.

Our first convent and school at St. Mary's are no longer in existence, but today we meet and minister with the people of the diocese in the many parishes and places where the spiritual and corporal works of mercy continue to be done.

This past Sunday, the Sisters of Mercy returned to St. Mary's to celebrate a jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving. Our prayer is deep in gratitude for the love, support and presence shown to us over the years by the people of the

diocese. We renew our commitment to service with you. Let us continue to strive together, to bring to completion the Kingdom of God in mercy and justice. "His mercy is from generation to generation." We give thanks for a God of Mercy who has blessed us so graciously and for each of you who journeys with us into His future. With gratitude and love,

Sister Jean Marie Kearse
Superior General
and the Sisters of Mercy
of Rochester

Organization Questioned

Editor:

Nuclear disarmament must be high on the agenda of every bishop throughout the world. It is the only acceptable and valid Christian response to the spectre of nuclear holocaust.

By the same token, there is a right way and a wrong way to work for the cause of peace. It is sad and disturbing to witness the official diocesan sanction, aid and abetment of an unworthy, so-called international Catholic peace movement. Specifically, I would like to call into question the recent role of the Diocesan Peace and Justice

Commission in promoting the start-up of a local chapter of Pax Christi by publicizing the organization in the Courier-Journal and its own house organ, Challenge.

As recently as last week, national Catholic publications carried coverage of the reaction of Latin American bishops (CELAM) to a tragically inaccurate, deplorable, biased and naive report about Nicaragua issued from the international headquarters of Pax Christi in Italy. This report not only lacked professional validity, it was inimical and slanderous to the Church. In view of the reaction of their brother Latin American bishops, one might reasonably ask what this means in terms of the 45 American bishops who allegedly are members of Pax Christi?

In the United States, Pax Christi is an organization whose objectives are diametrically opposed to the freedoms guaranteed to all Americans by the Constitution. It seeks to foment civil disobedience and dereliction of duty among American youth and to calumniate the men and women who serve (or have served) in our Armed Forces. Its chief American publicist, Gordon C. Zahn, a World War II draft resister and conscientious objector, is currently a sociology academician, who is particularly uncharitable in his slanderous criticism of those who serve in defense of our country. Pax Christi's "big lie" is the slick albeit erroneous innuendo that to serve in the Armed Forces is to be pro-nuclear arms.

This country and this diocese would be well-advised to note that Pax Christi, its objectives and its tactics are intended to suborn American Catholic youth by promoting civil disobedience and cynicism towards duty. As Americans, we have the God-given right and obligation to provide for our defense. Every young person fortunate enough to be born in these United States owes this country a stint of service — whether it be carrying an M-16 or a tray of medicine. Our government has provided reasonable alternatives for genuine and sincere conscientious objectors. Any organization which counsels young people to turn their backs on duty by acts of selfish and self-serving disobedience is worthy of nothing but disdain.

To work for peace is one thing. To do so using prevarication, slander and mean-spirited innuendo is quite another. Loyalty, a sense of duty and the proper spirit of patriotism will do more to prevent American involvement in a nuclear holocaust than any of the questionable Pax Christi tactics.

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Unjust Penalty

Editor:

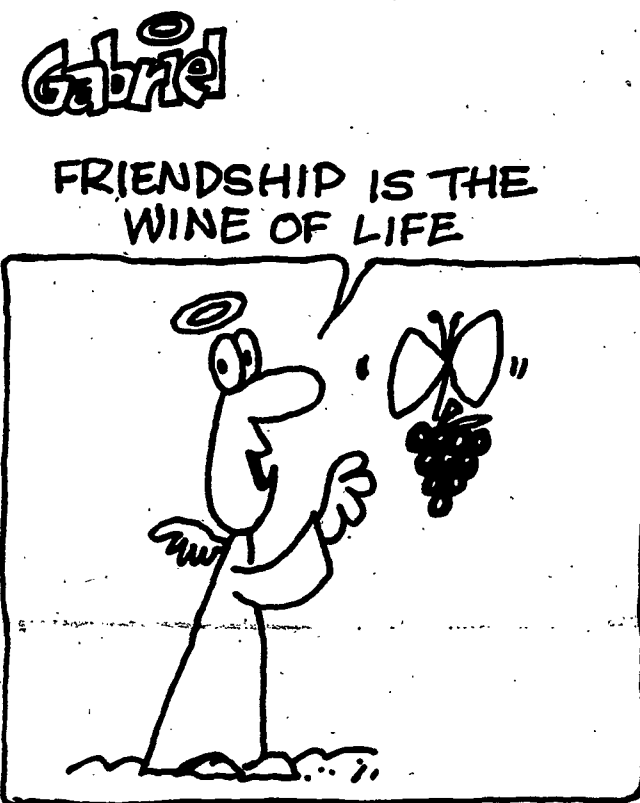
I am a 1954 graduate of Aquinas and have a son who will be a senior there in September. I am proud of Aquinas for many reasons: its academic prowess, excellent discipline, spiritual direction and guidance. However, my pride was somewhat tarnished after reading Brian Waldmiller's letter in the May 26 issue of the Courier-Journal.

Brian made a very difficult decision to attend and participate in a Jeremiah retreat and even a greater decision to share his spiritual experience with the diocese.

Brian, I admire your courage, maturity and your spirituality. And I could feel your shock and disappointment after returning home from your growth weekend and being told you were illegally absent from school and given 10 detentions. During my four years at Aquinas I received many "jugs" (detentions), but NEVER for experiencing Christ and others. The reason given for this was "Aquinas had set up retreats in school already" — to which Brian replied, "These were informative, but I did not experience Christ."

How sad that Brian had to look for his spirituality elsewhere, and then be punished for it. Please understand that I am not putting Aquinas down because of a lack of spirituality; not at all. Spirituality is experienced in many different ways by different people. No one can force spirituality, especially with our youth. Nor should anyone STIFLE one's search for it.

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Sacred Heart Devotion

Editor:

The month of June is barely upon us and immediately our thoughts turn to the many thoughts of love this month offers. For this reason, June is devoted to the Great Lover, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Greater love than this has no one, that one lay down his life for his friends."

What great love there is in the Sacred Heart of the Divine Victim of Calvary, whom we see nailed to the cross, bleeding to death for our redemption!

We need now and again to reflect and concentrate on the message and meaning of Christ's passion and death because for many souls the Figure of the Cross has lost its appeal and it only becomes a symbol of suffering. On the cross, in the mirror of Christ's suffering Heart, we see the evil of mankind's sins. We see that to atone for them, to pay the full penalty for our rebellion against God, to open our eyes blinded by passion and death and to move us to sorrow and true repentance, the Son of God Made Man suffers agonizing tortures in every member of His Body. Cruel thorns torture His Head, His immaculate flesh is disfigured by wounds and bruises, His hands and feet are pierced with nails — this sight of the suffering Christ shows us more than the evil of our sins. It points to the immeasurable depth of God's

love. A single drop of His Blood would have been sufficient to redeem us but He willed to shed His Blood to the last drop even causing His Sacred Heart to be pierced.

Mary, at the foot of this cross, united her sufferings with those of her son for the redemption of the whole human race. In this way, devotion to the Sacred Heart is intimately united to devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (June 18 and 19).

Mrs. Robert Leahy
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Death Penalty Espoused

Editor:

The Bible minces no words on the subject of capital punishment. Endless litigation is forestalled by precluding purely accidental homicide. Has God changed his mind? Hardly. But, right or wrong, methinks the cost of maintaining a criminal for life would feed a lot of hungry children — rescue many of them from a similar fate. And, who knows — capital punishment might cause prospective criminals to give second thought.

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THE LORD GIVES AND THE LORD TAKES AWAY! WHY WONT YOU BELIEVE THAT HE TOOK AWAY THE BROCCOLI?