

Editorials

Horror Story

"Without warning there was an enormous noise, like thousands of thunderclaps had fallen at once. Then I saw blood gush all over my face and I knew that a great bomb had fallen.

"I went outside and I could see only three or four yards in front of me, like it was a great black sediment. In a few moments, pandemonium broke out and cries were heard.

"Nowhere could be seen a person who was sane because everybody had suffered enormous injuries. They were running about, clothes tattered and blood all over them.

"At that time, I had no way of knowing that my wife and children had perished as they were near the

center of the blast. Well, I finally arrived at the apartment house in which we lived and it was reduced to ashes. And in the apartment I lived in I saw three skulls in a pile of rubble that was still smouldering.

"I had no way of knowing which was one was my wife. I stood and called out the name of my wife. I continued to look for bodies. Not knowing which was my wife, I picked up a bone from one of the remains and carefully put it in a container."

That account of the Nagasaki atomic bombing belongs to Gengo Watanabe. The blast killed 75,000 people and more than a third of the city was destroyed.

The Fourth

Our national consciousness seems to have been raised in recent years, most notably by the Vietnam

War and to a lesser degree by Watergate. We perhaps tend to be more introspective than previously.

This year, on Independence Day, it might be uplifting for Americans to remind ourselves that this country is still the cradle of democracy, that this nation still stands as a beacon of freedom to the rest of the world. This nation is still the leader of the free nations on earth.

Psychologically and spiritually speaking, no person can expect to influence others unless he first recognizes his own God-given self-worth. Nationally speaking, that holds true. We have boundless reason for self-esteem; we must remember that if we are to continue as a world leader.

This year, the Fourth falls on a Sunday. All churches should include a remembrance in the Liturgy to thank God for America.

and Opinions

Disarmament Information

Editor:

Re the letter by Mr. Fesh in the Courier-Journal of June 9, "Activist Bandwagon." We feel that several of his comments deserve a reply.

First, we trust that Mr. Fesh agrees that nuclear weapons are a threat. We applaud Bishop Clark for highlighting this threat in a letter to all diocesan pastors on May 7, 1982. He wrote, "There are many threats to peace today. The most awesome of them all is the presence of a vast arsenal of nuclear weapons, which endangers, on a global scale, God's very gift of life." Thus it seems that Catholic anti-nuclear activists, rather than being filled with "puffery and righteousness" are instead being realistic about the danger we all face.

Mr. Fesh suggested that we should acknowledge the possession of nuclear weapons by other countries as well as our own and that demonstrations be held at the embassies of all nuclear powers. This, in fact, has happened, as recently as June 13, 14, at the embassies of the five world super powers in New York City. This has been done in the past and will continue.

A concern also was raised that the means in raising consciousness about nuclear weapons would result in a demand for "unilateral emasculation." The demand rather is that the vast amount of monies spent on nuclear weapons be spent to feed the poor and help the weak; that the nuclear stockpiles which exist in the several nuclear powers be reduced and there be an immediate freeze on nuclear arms.

There is, however, for some people, a strong argument for unilateral disarmament. In the past, disarmament was based on the principles of pacifism; that is, there is nothing worth taking lives for. The Catholic concept of a just war was in conflict with these pacifist principles. Now, due to the advent of nuclear arms, the concept of a just war must be reconsidered in light of the widespread destruction that these weapons can produce. From Vatican Council II we read: "Any act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."

In order to more fully address questions and concerns such as those raised by Mr. Fesh, the Task Force on Nuclear Disarmament was formed in March as part of the Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission. Bishop Clark, in his "Pentecost and Peace" statement on May 26, urged "all people in the diocese to enter into a program of education on issues surrounding our national policies and actions in regard to nuclear armament."

The task force may be reached at 328-6400 or at 750 W. Main St., Rochester, 14611.

Diocesan Task Force on Nuclear Disarmament International Justice Commission

Way of Cross Not Easy

Editor:

Re Stephen Fesh's letter, June 9, on the involvement of U.S. Catholics in economic

concerns (Reaganomics) and in nuclear disarmament.

We believe these two areas must be addressed in the communal as well as the individual aspect of Christian responsibility.

Christ demands that we as individuals care for the poor. Through prayer and openness to God's prodding, which enables one to "put on the mind of Christ," we can experience "metanoia" — the complete "turning around" in mentality which is the essence of conversion. Only then is it possible to deny one's own material security and pleasures and follow Christ in complete concern for our neighbor's well-being. Then we approach becoming "perfect" as defined by Christ when he said, "Sell all you have, give to the poor, and come and follow me." (Matt. 19:21)

Our communal responsibility to be builders of a more just society is an integral part of our individual responsibility to the poor. This is preached throughout the Old and New Testaments (Amos 5:21-24, Isa. 32:6-8, Acts 4:32-35) and was central to the mission of the prophets and the early Church.

"Without government activity to safeguard the rights of individuals, man's basic selfishness can lead to a neglect of our responsibility for each other and for the common welfare," says the Statement of the Board of Bishops on the Role of Government in Social Policy (State Catholic Conference). "Economic injustice" creates "marginal people who lack the means to meet their basic needs. Even if government has not directly created this imbalance, it does bear a heavy responsibility to attempt to correct it by every means at its disposal." From this comes our obligation to question the priorities of a "Reaganomics" which cuts programs beneficial to the needy in order to increase military spending.

Re the demand for nuclear disarmament. This is not "caving in" or committing suicide as Mr. Fesh suggests. Rather, it is an attempt to more faithfully follow Jesus who left himself unprotected, vulnerable. In becoming like Him, we can overcome our own tendency toward violence and attempt that human impossibility which becomes possible in God — to love one another.

The recent anti-nuclear demonstrations in NYC included protests at the U.N. missions of all five nuclear

nuclear-weapon possessing nations. However, because we cannot necessarily influence the actions of another country, the primary goal is to affect the morality of our own society, the one we can most readily affect. "Remove the plank from your own eye first, then you will see clearly to take the speck from your brother's eye." (Matt 7:5)

The Christian may never wait for other parties to behave morally (universal nuclear disarmament) before he himself is willing to risk a moral stance. Following Christ is risk-filled and can lead to resurrection only by way of the cross.

Human Development Committee Blessed Sacrament Church Monroe and Oxford Streets Rochester, N.Y. 14607

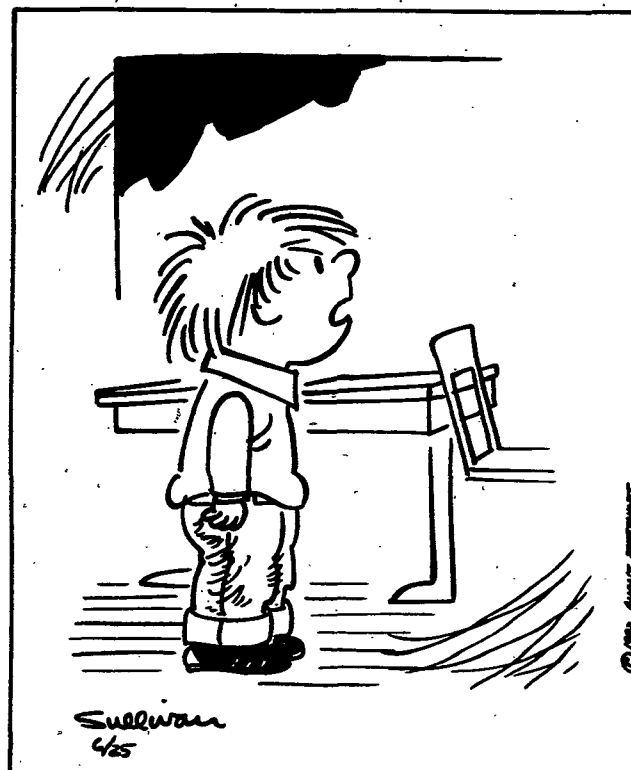
Writer Not Mean-Spirited

Editor:

I responded to the announcement of the Pax Christi organization in Challenge. My motivation is that history has proven that wars build more wars, each succeeding war more devastating of the Lord's humanity — us. Currently we are on the brink of international suicide — there is no defense, no security, we are at the survival stage of the Lord's humanity — us.

I have found the Rochester Pax Christi to be concerned about a nonviolent approach to peace. We are, as I see it, educating ourselves at this stage. To say we are using prevarication, slander and mean-spirited innuendo is not acceptable to me or any other member I know. If this accusation is not documented with specific facts, it should be withdrawn, otherwise it falls into the category it is condemning.

My personal view is that too long we have neglected our God-given right and duty that prompted our forefathers to found this country — freedom. And that includes freedom to dissent, which was one of the primary motivating forces for the founding fathers of the U.S.A. and this is protected in the Constitution! It has all but lost its identity but dissent with integrity is our basis for freedom. This is what made America in the first place and it needs to be revived. We too often have been herded into government organizations for "defense" or some other fantasy. We need to take on our neglected



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responsibility of being fully alive Catholic Americans.

Only Jesus Can Save

Editor:

I am writing to comment about an item which appeared in the C-J, June 16. On Page 2, there is an advertisement headed "Rosary of the Sacred Heart." Toward the bottom there is a line which says, "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation."

My Bible says, "This Jesus is the stone rejected by you the builders which has become the cornerstone. There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved." (Acts 4: 11-12)

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me." (John 14:6) And later in his prayer to the Father, "Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3)

It doesn't seem to me that seeking salvation through the heart or name of Mary stands up very well when compared to scripture. How is this reconciled? As Catholic Christians should we not base the content and expression of our faith on the Word of God?

Edward R. Bremer 4987 Lake Road Brockport, N.Y. 14420

Pastoral Letter Appreciated

Editor:

A belated letter of deep thanks and appreciation to Bishop Clark for his splendid pastoral letter, "The Fire in the Thornbush."

I hope it will be read and reflected upon by many. Further, that we may be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit toward a fuller understanding of the riches of our faith, in this matter and all of Christianity.

A. E. Guidarelli, O.D. 110 High St. Newark, N.Y. 14513

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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 S., 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 abusive 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.