

Editorials

Yes, Let's Stop The Baby Killers!

Irony is bitter... If only we could recognize it in its embryonic stage, what anguish could be saved!

On Sept. 12, in this space, this newspaper deplored the ominous practice of the use of amniocentesis to identify the sex of the unborn with the intention of aborting females. The procedure is gaining popularity in the Far East, particularly India.

Almost at the very time of the publication, the editor of this newspaper received a note from Katharine Hepburn, speaking for Planned Parenthood and against the human life amendments now before the Congress.

"Normally, I don't get involved in public controversy," she wrote, "but reproductive freedom is basic, personal (her emphasis) and one that I feel very strongly about for personal reasons."

She points out that her mother helped Margaret Sanger found Planned Parenthood.

The famed actress then criticizes supporters of the human life proposals as "militant pro-lifers who have screamed the loudest with such hostile slogans as 'Stop the Baby Killers!' "

She then, or at least her writer does, trots out all the scare watchwords — "back-alley butchery," the "darker era" of history to which she sees a return, etc. The actress in her should have realized that the writing was not very original.

No one should deny Miss Hepburn the right to her opinion and the coincident right to use her prestige, albeit much of it gained from the very people she minimizes, to stump for Planned Parenthood. This holds true even when she castigates others for exercising the same right.

However, she and her writers should consider still another timely report. Since the Courier-Journal editorial, the Gannett Sunday newspaper in Rochester reported on the sexist trend in the Far East under the main headline, "Amniocentesis in India," with the subhead, "Many parents use it to identify and then abort female fetuses." Anyone who missed it shouldn't feel delinquent; the story was relegated to Page 12D.

This issue will not stay on the 12Ds of our secular newspapers.

The story was written by John Schidlovsky of the Baltimore Sun. In it he reported on newspaper ads in the northern city of Amritsar offering "sex-checking tests" as preliminary steps to "family planning."

For 500 rupees, about \$52, doctors will conduct an amniocentesis, a procedure established to check for possible birth defects, but which also indicates the sex of the unborn child.

The writer also quotes an expert on population studies: "It is nothing short of female infanticide."

The Hindustan Times of New Delhi accused doctors of seeking "to make a fast buck by pandering to society's antediluvian values." (Aside to Miss Hepburn and her writers, that translates to very old.)

And here that word irony emerges again. Those who long ago opposed abortion on demand as potentially leading to such heinous procedures were characterized as "living in the dark ages" in a Gannett editorial.

The Courier-Journal editorial of Sept. 12 quoted the news magazine Asiaweek which said the trend is causing "a nationwide furor among women's organizations — the same groups that led the fight for liberalized abortions."

It also quoted a leading Indian feminist, "The most disturbing facet of the sex tests is the resultant sanction of abortion as a routine method of population control."

Several such groups in India are demanding that the government take action against private doctors who advertise amniocentesis procedures purely for sex determination procedures.

Sort of like using such "hostile slogans" as "Stop the Baby Killers."

And, yes, dear reader, they are appealing to the government to do something about it; the same "government" that in our country was told by the Supreme Court to stay out of "private" affairs. Miss Hepburn eschewed the word "private" for "personal," but the meaning is the same.

Granted, Miss Hepburn probably didn't really write the letter over her signature. As an actress, she is used

to mouthing the words of others. But as a person she should reconsider these pertinent facts.

The monstrosity growing in the Far East has already touched these shores. A Los Angeles hospital reported in 1980 that of 800 amniocentesis procedures done there up until then, four had been for possible sex abortions.

She should mull that catch phrase used by the Hindustan Times — "fast buck." She should realize that when it comes to the amassing of money — the prime purpose of abortion clinics — anything goes.

God grant the sight to secular newspapers, the Katharine Hepburns and all those who honestly accept abortion to see that society's headlong rush toward "quality of life" is fostering hedonistic trends that will diminish us all.

This editorial would be incomplete without two suggested follow-throughs.

The withdrawal of the Hatch Amendment for this year is an unhappy event. Yet it could work to the advantage of those who work for the sanctity of life for it provides another year to build support. Letters should be sent to Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, 100 State St., Rochester, N.Y. 14614, and Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Readers may also wish to send a copy of this editorial to Katharine Hepburn, care of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 810 Seventh Ave., Box 5687, New York, N.Y. 10249. She probably won't get it, but her writers will.

Frightening

A sickening thud. That's what many felt in the pit of their stomachs with the news of the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Beirut last week. Although investigations may prove differently, it, at least as of now, appears possible that "Christian" forces may be responsible for the carnage.

Regardless whether the perpetrators are Christians or Israelis or members of some other faction in that torn land, the dark reminder that human beings are capable of such atrocity is frightening.

An immediate fact is clear: the rush to violence to settle differences has once again been revealed in all its hideousness.

Pray to God for the victims and for understanding.

and Opinions

Sound Off At Insects

Editor:

Not all communication in the insect world is by scents that lure or repel. Sound may also be a warning or an attraction. The constant stream of ultra-sonic sound that issues from a bat in flight (serving as a radar system to guide it in the darkness) is heard by certain moths, enabling them to avoid capture. The wing sounds of approaching parasitic flies warn the larvae of some sawflies to herd together for protection. The sounds made by certain wood-boring insects

enable their parasites to find them.

What use, if any, can be made of this ability of the insect to detect and react to sound? As yet in the experimental stage, but nonetheless interesting, is the initial success in attracting male mosquitos to playback recordings of the flight sound of the female. The males were lured to a charged grid and so killed. The repellent effect of bursts of ultra-sonic sound is being tested in Canada against corn borer and cutworm moths. Two authorities on animal sound, Professors Hubert and Mable Frings of the University of Hawaii, believe that a field method of

influencing the behavior of insects with sound only awaits the discovery of the proper key to unlock and apply the vast existing knowledge of insect sound production and reception. Repellent sounds may offer greater possibilities than attractants. The Frings are known for their discovery that starlings scatter in alarm before a recording of the distress cry of one of their fellows, perhaps somewhere in this fact is a central truth that may be applied to insects.

Sound is also being tested as an agent of direct destruction. Ultra-sonic sound will kill all mosquito larvae in a laboratory tank. In other experiments, blowflies, mealworms and yellow fever mosquitos have been killed by airborne ultra-sonic sound in a matter of seconds. All such experiments are steps in new concepts of insect control. So try some non-chemical controls yourself in your yard work.

Christianity, with Catholicism at the head. It also seemed to say that Christians are less than "Catholic" Christians in that "... others may be members of the body of Christ — but the fact is that Catholics are..."

In an era where it is fashionable not to be Christian or to talk of the Christian way of life, we should cultivate it rather than create a class system.

Further, it seems un-Christian to say that any one religion is better or closer to Christ than any other. We both believe that we are Christians first and Catholics second. In our opinion this does not, in any way, deny our Catholic faith.

The article seems to have taken us backward in time to a place of less awareness of who Christ is and how He touches all of us. Furthermore, the Bible does not seem to mention Catholicism, but does talk quite a bit about being Christ-like.

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Christians First, Then Catholic

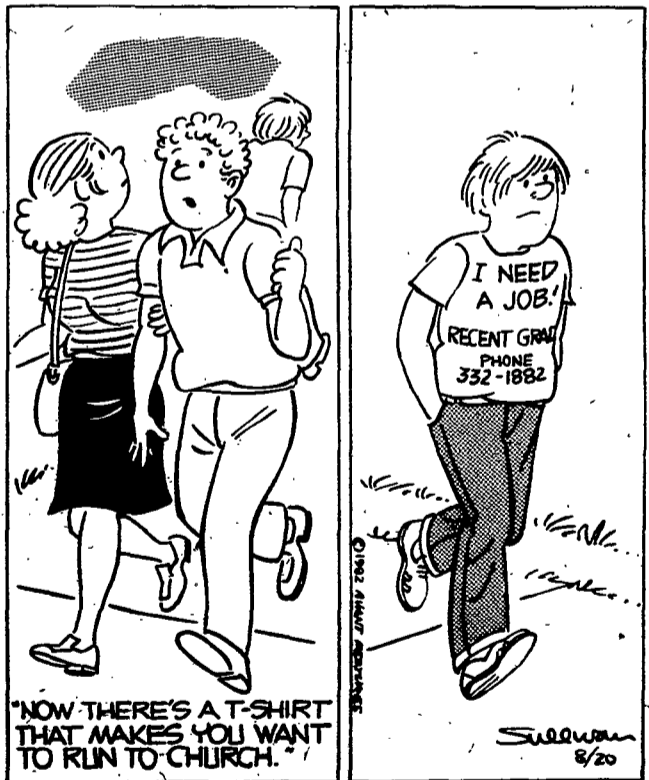
Editor:

In response to Father Shannon's article of Sept. 8, we were very disappointed in that it spoke of stratification in

Genuflecting A Prayer

Editor:

It appears to me that another beautiful Catholic



custom is slowly disappearing from our churches, that is genuflecting. The good nuns who taught me told us to genuflect to bend the right knee until it touches the floor. To me, genuflecting is both an act of adoration and a prayer of faith. We Catholics believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present in our tabernacles and on our altars. This is truly a great privilege to have our God so close to us. How can we content ourselves by just bowing to Him?

thritus or other bodily ills to genuflect but surely able-bodied men and women and teenagers should be only too happy to pay tribute to Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It would do everyone good to visit Lady of Victory Church and see the people genuflect on both knees before Jesus exposed in the monstrance. With the great St. Teresa, I love to exclaim, "Thank God I am a child of Holy Mother the Church."

Leo F. Zeller 4 Canton St. Rochester, N.Y. 14606

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 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.