

Editorials

Ayatollah Still at It

With the Iranian hostage situation long over, Americans tend to forget about the despotic rule of Ayatollah Khomeini.

However, those of the Baha'i Faith are not so lucky. Another member of that religion was executed on Nov. 21, killed by a firing squad in Shiraz.

He was the second Baha'i to be executed during the week, the first was hanged.

According to the Baha'i Office for Public Affairs in Illinois, more than 130 Baha'is have been killed, thousands are homeless and hundreds are forbidden employment. All Baha'i properties, cemeteries and holy places have been seized or destroyed by the fundamentalist government.

Their crimes? They merely want to practice their religion, which has been barred by the ayatollah. And what does the Baha'i religion teach? The need for world unity and peace, the equality of men and women and the elimination of all forms of prejudice.

The fundamentalist Muslims, led by Khomeini, find such ideals repugnant and those espousing them worthy of execution.

A letter, prepared by three members of the

American House of Representatives, has been sent to President Reagan. It asks him to express the "moral outrage of the people of this country over the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran."

Admitted, such messages fail to dim the ayatollah's lust for violent domination, but at least it will let the world be more aware of what is going on and that this country does not countenance such deprivation of basic rights.

Papal Empathy For U.S. Bishops

Those who think that Pope John Paul II and the U.S. bishops are on different wave lengths over the nuclear armament issue should ponder the fact that the Holy Father has sent the Americans a message lauding their efforts for justice and peace.

To be sure, he sent it before the final version of the pastoral letter still under preparation, but its empathy is unmistakable. Received while they were debating the letter on nuclear weapons, the letter said the pontiff "profoundly appreciates your ecclesial union with him and your strong desire to manifest sensitivity to the complexity and urgency of pastoral issues, particularly justice and peace."

The National Catholic News Service characterizes this letter as "clearly an endorsement, in the normal diplomatic style of the Vatican Secretariat of State, of the bishops' decision to take up the issue."

It should be pointed out that the letter is by no means a closed book. The bishops are more than aware

of the sensitivity of this issue and the well-founded fears of the citizenry concerning disarmament in the face of the Communist threat.

For that reason, they, including Bishop Matthew H. Clark, will be seeking the reactions of concerned Catholics, whatever their opinions.

And naturally, such opinion should be expressed in constructive, rational and calm terms and tone. Vituperation and divisive attitude will serve no purpose.

The issue is momentous; it must be handled with care.

Is this Pause Judicial?

Whether it is good news that the Supreme Court is hearing testimony on three issues regarding abortion naturally must await its decisions.

However, the situation is already disheartening since the court is not expected to announce its stand until July. Although the overturning of its 1973 decision is not at issue, it still should be kept in mind that by next July:

- Some 875,000 unborn babies will be killed by abortion in the United States.
• Some 3,000 unborn babies will be killed by abortion in the Diocese of Rochester.
• Some 2,165 unborn babies will be killed by abortion in Monroe County.

and Opinions

Missioners' Car Stolen

Editor:

About a month ago, Dan and Margaret Whalen of East Avon left for their missions in Mexico. Tragically, three days after their arrival in Guadalajara, their station-wagon was stolen. Dan, as deacon, was going to help in three parishes in addition to their direct ministrations to the poor and sick in their established clinics.

As Margaret put in her letter, "We are lost without the vehicle. The loss is traumatic. There is no likelihood of it being returned and the loss financially is enormous." She, perhaps prophetically, adds a note about the increased degree of unrest and thievery generated by dire poverty.

Friends of the Whalens know how frugally they live and how they trim expenses so all available funds go into direct help for the poor. Their insurance was with the Lord and St. Martin de Porres, their patron.

Those familiar with that insurance "company" know how its policies call to all members of Christ's body to offer whatever comfort we can to those who suffer. It is always difficult to see the Lord working in such negative events and, alone, we may not be able to do so. We may need the help of each other's vision of faith to do so.

Should you care to write to the Whalens or to make a "widow's mite" donation toward their immediate need, either or both will be forwarded to them by the office of The Society for Propagation of Faith, 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

James G. Connor
6079 Ontario Center Road
Ontario, N.Y. 14519

Bishops Questioned

Editor:

I do not believe bishops know any more than I do about nuclear matters; in fact, considering recent news, they might very well know less.

This brings up the

inevitable question: In how many other areas do they know less than I (like Vatican II); and isn't it about time these areas were ascertained?

If our liberal intellectual elites want a non-nuclear war, let it begin now.

John F. Starkweather
1840 Middle Road
Rush, N.Y. 14543

Are Bishops Ducking Issues?

Editor:

What an ideal way to gloss over and obscure the theological and catechetical divisions and disarray in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States — a pastoral letter on nuclear warfare built on theoretical infrastructure of speculative theology and ad hoc scriptural proof-texting (not to mention geopolitical naivete).

By at least one projection, the current total of 57,000 priests in the United States will dwindle to 28,000 by the early 1990s. One and a half million babies are murdered in abortion clinics and hospitals annually. Hundreds of thousands of divorced and separated Catholics are in need of healing and support. The totality of solid formational programs for Catholic youth is suffering from severe anemia (thanks to the secularization of youth programs in many dioceses). Catholic elementary and secondary schools are in a life and death struggle daily to keep their doors open and pay their bills. Evangelization, spiritual formation, obedience, sacrifice, liturgical devotions are all subsumed and closeted away by use of the strite phrase so popular with so-called progressives — "Saving the Saved." If the Catholic hierarchy in the United States are to have any credibility, perhaps they might begin by questioning their own sincerity and loyalty in their relationships with the Holy Father as leader and teacher.

Bishop Hunthausen's "Auschwitz" is not in Putget Sound — it is in the abortion clinics and hospitals in Seattle. Archbishop Bernardin's contention that the NCCB has as much expertise in matters relating to nuclear warfare as the media results in an interesting equation...! As the saying goes, a little knowledge is dangerous thing!

With specific regard to this diocese, it is regrettable that honest dialogue on the pastoral letter was ignored. But, what can one expect in a diocese where Rev. Charles Curran, that champion of Paul VI and loyal theologian, is made to feel so welcome so often?

William F. Schmitz
174 Cedar Grove Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14617

Do Bishops Misuse Position?

Editor:

I urge our Catholic clergy to participate in the nuclear weapon debate and indeed in all national policy discussion — but as individuals, private citizens, using the names, titles and academic degrees.

I fear that on issues on which they may have less than perfect expertise, their use of episcopal authority, to which I and other American Catholics would wish to submit, will be detrimental to the democratic process.

Mrs. Margaret R. Gilman
387 Canterbury Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Brazil Sisters Ask Prayers

Editor:

Using the Courier as a means of reaching the people of Rochester, we wish to send to all of you an assurance of our prayer, particularly at this time of year when we realize more vividly, perhaps, God's infinite goodness to us in sending His Son — the



"I REALLY LIKED YOUR LAST SERMON ON PARADISE."

message of liberation — in Person.

We ask you to join us in prayer that all people, all over the world, may feel His liberating presence and power.

Without the generosity of the people of the Diocese of Rochester, our presence here in Brazil would be impossible. We thank you for your continuing care and concern for God's poor and for the privilege you make possible for us of serving them more closely.

With best wishes for a happy and holy Christmas.

Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester in Brazil

sponsored by the diocesan Department of Education and not by the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents as stated in the article.

The federation does sponsor the scholarships awarded to the top three winners in the oratoricals. These scholarships are made possible by pledges of businesses, organizations and individuals who in turn sponsor Bishop Clark's participation in our annual marathon for Catholic schools.

Michael S. Walker
President
Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents
500 Ripplewood Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

Oratoricals Correction

Editor:

Thank you for your coverage of the Bishop's Oratoricals. However, in justice, I must point out an error. The oratoricals are

(Editor's note — The Courier-Journal report is based on information received from Mary E. Quinn, publicity chairman, Holy Trinity School, who stated "the sponsor of this year's event is The Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents...")

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 block 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.