

**Editorials**

**Who Gave Bishops the Right?**

Lest Americans get the mistaken impression that only their bishops are speaking out on critical issues concerning the world at large, they should consider the following news items provided by the National Catholic News Service.

Dateline Berlin: "East Germany's Catholic bishops have added their voices to those of Protestant churches and a small peace movement in criticizing militarism in the Communist-run country. In a pastoral letter Jan. 2, the bishops attacked East German authorities for the 'thinking in militaristic categories' in schools. They condemned the use of

nuclear weapons and said any war in which such weapons might be used is immoral."

Dateline Toronto: "The Canadian Catholic bishops' Social Affairs Commission has stirred a national debate with a statement attacking government and corporate economic policies. The statement said Gospel values demand putting the needs of the poor above the wants of the rich and the rights of workers above company profits."

Dateline Dublin: "Ireland's Catholic bishops expressed support for a proposed constitutional amendment designed to protect the lives of unborn children."

How dare bishops get involved in such temporal matters as nuclear disarmament, the rights of workers and constitutional amendments concerning abortion, as well as a stack of other worldly issues? Perhaps they get it from one of their number, the bishop of Rome, who addresses these subjects consistently and forcefully.

**Not Indelible**

Jan 22, 1973.

This nation would be a better place in which to live if that date had no significance. Would that it were just another January day as it had been down through the centuries until a decade ago.

Then it would be just another January Saturday, perhaps dreary but not despairing. Perhaps it would snow without the flakes recalling the missions of innocents put to death in the past 10 years. Perhaps it would be a boring day — and a blessed boredom it would be.

But that all changed when the highest court of the land doomed the date to infamy with its decision to make abortion law.

However, Jan. 22, 1973, is not chisled indelibly into the low of the land. It can be erased if Americans stand up for the rights of unborn babies. As indeed many have, as indeed many are still doing, as indeed many will continue to do.

**and Opinions**

**Boycott Seen Radical Cause**

Editor:

I would like to present the conservative point of view on the Nestle/Stouffer affair.

In the 1970s at UN-sponsored meetings on world

hunger, it was alleged that the misuse of infant formula in the Third World contributed to a decline in breastfeeding and was responsible for an increase in malnutrition and mortality.

A Dr. Derrick Jelliffe claimed by 1978 there were 10 million cases of infant illness and death due to bottle feeding. He later admitted the

figure was symbolic, and this and similar assertions, such as that Nestle over-aggressively marketed its product, were never proven. Nestle and competitors instituted a voluntary code of ethics.

However, the controversy became political, motivated by the desire of radical leftists to control multinational corporations. Religious leaders in the U.S. conscientiously believed the charges and rhetoric of the activists, some of whom would frankly admit that their primary concern was political, rather than infant health.

The World Health Organization passed an Infant Formula Code with which Nestle immediately cooperated. As the leader of a conservative Catholic meeting recently held in Rochester said: "Did this make the activists less mad? Not at all — they were madder than ever." They did not want the Nestle Corporation let off the hook. They wanted the issue kept alive to help attract attention to and support of the radical causes they espoused.

The Nestle/Stouffer boycott has become a radical liberal chic cause, like the nuclear freeze, which is unilateral disarmament, and the vote against building new prisons which are now badly needed in the state.

It would seem that even a college graduate could understand that if mothers had to use polluted water to mix with the infant formula, the children would have to drink the polluted water in some form or go thirsty. What are all these paper activists doing to improve the water supply in these areas? Or is it easier to complain than to install water systems?

**John Starkweather  
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Rush, N.Y. 14543**

**Can't Certify El Salvador**

Editor:

In two weeks' time, President Reagan will again be required to certify to the 98th Congress and the American people that there has been real progress in human rights in El Salvador.

The reality is that human rights in El Salvador are worsening daily, that there has been no progress in achieving promised economic and political reforms and that, contrary to what the Reagan

administration claimed, last March's much vaunted elections in El Salvador have changed nothing.

After his meeting with Salvadoran President Magana on his recent visit to Central America, Reagan stated that he would indeed certify that there has been progress in human rights in El Salvador. This paves the way for increased U.S. military funding for a civil war that has resulted in the deaths of 36,000 Salvadorans in the past three years. The Salvadoran army consists of 26,000 men, including police forces, the guerrillas about 5,000 or 6,000. Most of the 36,000 deaths have been those of innocent unarmed civilians caught in the anguish of a war that our own U.S. government is daily helping to perpetuate. And it is a war being fought over social problems that are older than any Soviet threat and that existed long before Fidel Castro was born.

Citizens concerned about the military intervention policy of the Reagan administration and, even more, citizens who care about their suffering brothers and sisters in El Salvador are asked to write to President Reagan strongly objecting to the January 1983 certification for El Salvador.

Write to President Reagan, The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500.

**Joe Piersante  
Justice and  
Peace Commission  
750 W. Main St.  
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**Why No Women Cardinals?**

Editor:

It is regrettable that in the creation of new cardinals the Pope has failed to include any women. When the Catholic Church is divided and confused, as it now seems to be, the remedy is to broaden its representation base to legitimize it among sectors of society that might otherwise be alienated. American corporations generally recognize this principle in selecting their boards of directors.

Perhaps the gravest crisis in Church history occurred



"BEFORE I HAND YOU THE BILL, WOULD YOU LEAD US IN PRAYER?"

**Fr. Louis J. Hohman**



*The Open Window*

**Pilgrimage To Truth**

Dear Father Hohman,

I recently heard a Catholic theologian on television state, with great pride, that Joan of Arc, after being condemned as a witch by a Church tribunal, went to her death saying that the Church, for her, was Jesus Christ. I find great problems in logic and truth in this. Doesn't Jesus Christ represent the greatest and complete truth?

Many learned priests (yourself included) note the common practice of the clergy teaching falsely, "in order to keep the people from going wrong or misunderstanding," for example, the strictness in the U.S. of not missing Mass on Sunday. Why are such false or exaggerated teachings deliberately practiced in the true faith?

H.N.

Dear H.N.

There are many ways of looking at Church and several ways are employed in your letter. The Church is the People of God redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, but also consecrated, set apart, made holy by commitment to Jesus Christ in the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist). That is to say that those who accept Jesus Christ in faith, celebrate the receiving of the Spirit in those three sacraments. They then live by the Spirit of God and are called children of God. They still retain, however, their free will and therefore the capability of sin. They still

have human limitations and therefore have the capability of deviating from Truth.

Looking at the Church from one point of view, it is the Body of Jesus Christ, and that is how Joan of Arc identified it with Jesus. On the other hand, it is made up of human beings who are by no means perfect or complete and therefore can be in error. Priests, even though leaders in the Church are given charisms of leadership, are still human and can be in error. You cite one example of this: over-zealousness for making people good can easily lead to exaggeration in doctrine.

A better example than yours, I think, is the "fire and brimstone" sermon of another era (I hope). Very often such preachers would grossly exaggerate the punishment while also maximizing the sense of guilt. Wrong, but not so intended. Sad, but the human condition.

The Church is on a journey to the fullness of Truth, not in relationship to the head, but to the members. We may not expect to have a white and black view — things absolutely right or wrong even down to the most minute detail. The essential truths of our faith are beyond doubt, but many other things are open to question. Incidentally, even the essential truths may be someday couched in more perfect language. Language is human, and has human limitations.

In the Church, then, we have divine and human, certainty and doubt, in the enterprise that is the union between God and humankind.

when residence of the popes at Avignon threatened to isolate them from the universal Church. Then it was a woman, St. Catherine of Siena, who convinced Gregory XI to return to the See of Rome. The woman's viewpoint might be equally beneficial today. Feminine leadership in government has already been popularly accepted in such diverse societies as India, Israel and Great Britain.

opportunity employer.

**George M. Korb  
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**Literature Needed**

Editor:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines directly to the foreign missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

**Mary Conway  
14 Castle St.  
Cork, Ireland**

**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 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.