

Editorials

Hatch Proposal Nearing Vote

In last week's Courier-Journal, Bishop Matthew H. Clark published a letter to all diocesans asking their support for the Hatch Eagleton Amendment to the Constitution which states simply, "The right to abortion is not secured in this Constitution."

Bishop Clark pointed out that this amendment is not the end-all in the controversy over liberalized abortion but that it is indeed a first step toward sanity as far as the rights of the unborn are concerned.

The more extensive original Hatch Amendment died for lack of action in last year's Senate. At that time, Majority Leader Sen. Howard Baker promised

swift action on the amendment this year. The amendment still awaits full Senate debate.

Reports continually circulate that such action is imminent but NC News Service last week informed this newspaper that the situation is still tentative. Such are the perils of weekly newspapering; by the time this editorial appears, the Senate may have scheduled, or even debated, the proposal.

However, it is vitally important for anyone interested in restoring the rights of the unborn to so inform their senators -- Alfonse D'Amato and Daniel Moynihan. Their address is Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

The diocesan committee working to reverse the Supreme Court decision of 1973 which made abortion the law of the land has sent out an alert to all parishes. It advises letters to the senators in favor of the amendment but also advises those who don't have time to write to send mailgrams -- "just call

Western Union's nationwide toll-free number and give your message of 50 words or less: (1) (800) 257-2241. The cost (\$4.45) is added to your phone bill. Next-day service is guaranteed." That kind of urgency is necessary regarding this amendment, not only for its content but also because action is looming.

When writing the senators, it may be helpful to keep in mind that Sen. Moynihan belongs to the "however" club -- he opposes abortion -- however -- he also opposes legal protection for the unborn and opposes ending abortion funding. Sen D'Amato supports both legal protection and an end to abortion funding, but he should be reaffirmed in those positions by as many letters as possible.

Bishop Clark put it succinctly: "The innocent cannot speak for themselves, cannot cry out for justice. It is only our voices which will be heard on their behalf."

and Opinions

Keep Church Silent

EDITOR:

I'm beginning to think there is too much noise going on in church, especially during the Mass. When they are changing the kneeling benches it sounds like a battery of machineguns. At one time when I was saying my prayers, a couple of women started talking. I had to stop praying because I could not concentrate.

Incidentally, I wonder what happened to that commandment about bearing false witness against your neighbor.

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Concentrate On Unity

EDITOR:

I was pleased and uplifted to read Dorothy Prinzi's letter, May 4. It is good to know that someone out there still upholds the same convictions as mine. Like Dorothy, I, too, experience deep contentment in the role God has given me. Point by point, I could repeat what she so adequately wrote, since my thoughts are quite the same, but instead I ask that the silent majority read her letter and speak out to encourage those who feel "alone."

Although we have divided opinions in our holy Catholic faith, we also have the one Church where we can receive

the daily Bread of Life in the Eucharist. "He who eats my body and drinks my blood, abides in me, and I in him." As long as we have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with the Real Presence of Jesus in our Communion, we have a bond with one another that will heal the wounds of many and call back those who left the faith with bitterness. We must not concentrate on differences nor argue among ourselves, but through honest conversation and shared convictions, we will be drawn together as one people of God. Let us call upon the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name, daily and allow the Spirit to lead us to truth and unity.

Barbara A. Fischer
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Story Good . . . But

EDITOR:

Many people would be appalled at the atrocious religious persecution in the world today, not in the revolutionary states of Central America or in the emerging nations of Africa, but in Eastern Europe. This subject is one too often ignored and I commend the Courier-Journal on its recent augmentation of material dealing with the religious situation behind the Iron Curtain.

However, your World News brief of May 10 re the arrest of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas requires clarification. First, the U.S. and most nations of the Free World have not recognized the illegal annexation of independent Lithuania in 1944. Therefore, your designation of Lithuania as a "Soviet Republic" is indeed a mistake. A much more appropriate title would be "Occupied Lithuania." Such differences in nomenclature are extremely important in forming our views on the present-day situation.

Second, it was reported that Father Svarinskas was arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda. Few realize that preparing children for Communion is an act of anti-Soviet propaganda, as is regularly attending Mass. Participation in a religious procession could result in loss of job, or for students, obstruction of paths to higher education.

Russian diplomacy toward the West is aimed at legitimizing its conquests. The Communists depend on our silent resignation to carry out their repressions. Let us not forget our brethren in Christ behind the Iron Curtain.

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Bishops Help 'Pro-Aborts'

EDITOR:

Internationally the last 10 years have witnessed the murder of a half billion of our unborn brothers and sisters in the abortion holocaust. Given the magnitude of the slaughter it is curious that a pastoral on abortion should emanate not from the American bishops but from the president of the U.S., Ronald Reagan, in an article he wrote in the Human Life Review. Commenting on the presidential concern on abortion and infanticide, columnists Evans and Nowak noted the anomaly that "Catholic leadership" is allied mainly with pro abortions on Capitol Hill.

This poor esteem by "Catholic leadership" for the unborn was also demonstrated in the Sister Mansour incident when the leaders of 400 woman congregations campaigned to have their members write against the unborn in a show of support for Sister Mansour.

It seems that the American Catholic leadership is willing to promote or at least live comfortably with the pro abort mindset for another decade or so as the death count rounds out to an even billion. May God forbid it.

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Editor's Note: This letter really constitutes an unfair criticism of our bishops. They have spoken out, individually and as a group, so often against abortion that some say they have damaged the cause by making it too much of a "Catholic issue." They have been termed reactionaries and worse by pro-abortionists. They have been the subjects of bigoted cartoons by Planned Parenthood. They have been labeled male chauvinist pigs. They have worked assiduously to reverse the 1973 Supreme Court ruling on abortion. They have issued the Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities. They have been working for an amendment to the constitution restoring the right to life of the unborn. Indeed, even in the pastoral letter on war and peace there is a section on the evil of abortion. There is not room enough in this newspaper to list the countless times they have spoken for the rights of the unborn. It should also be pointed out that the Sister Mansour case is far too complicated for such facile judgments. No one urged anyone to write against the unborn and that is an uncharitable characterization of "400 woman congregations."

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Love Is Bond of Unity

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 9/11-17. (R1) Gn. 14/18-20. (R2) 1 Cor. 11/23-26.

On Ascension Thursday I was speaking to the kids from the public schools. I asked them what is the difference between departure and disappearance. One lad, Bryan Smith, said rightly: "Departure means to leave a place; whereas disappearance means to be in a place still, but be no longer visible."

I then asked, "was the ascension of our Lord a departure or a disappearance? If it were a departure," I went on to say, "why would the apostles be joyful?"

Then I asked, "Did the Son of God leave His Father when He came to earth?" Of course not, for the Son did not cease to be God on earth, and God is everywhere.

Then I asked, "Did the Son of God leave us when He returned to the Father?" Again, the answer was no, for Jesus is God and as God He is everywhere. So Jesus could and did say, "I am with you all days."

Then I explained why the ascension of Jesus was such a great joy for the apostles. It meant that Jesus needed no more to be localized, locked in the body to the land of Palestine. After His ascension He could be present to all of us, everywhere and for all times. This meant, too, that Jesus was no longer straightjacketed by the limitations of His humanity, that He could unleash power from on high on His Church. The story of our Lord's ascension concludes the Lucan gospel, as the ascension is meant to conclude our lives; however, the ascension begins the Acts of the Apostles -- Luke's second volume. For the Acts demonstrate how great was that power from on high which the ascended Lord gave His Church. The Acts show the Church literally exploding, expanding from Jerusalem, to Samaria, to the ends of

the earth.

Now both this presence and this power of the risen Christ have passed into the sacraments -- are operative especially at Mass. At every Mass there is a little bit of ascension: a little bit of us goes to heaven with Jesus as we offer our sacrifices with His. And likewise at every Mass there is an unleashing of power.

After offering the life-giving bread and the saving cup at Mass after the Eucharistic Proclamation, we pray, "May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit." We ascend to heaven with our gifts; but in return we ask gifts from heaven: first, the Holy Spirit, the God of love; then Holy Communion, the sacrament of love.

Before the consecration, we invoke the Holy Spirit to come upon the bread and wine and make them the body and the blood of Christ. Now after the consecration, we ask the same Holy Spirit to come, not upon the bread and wine, but upon the people gathered together at Mass and make them the one body of Christ. How? Through the fire of love. Love is the bond of unity.

But love is not something that comes from within us by drilling, as for oil, deep down into our hearts; rather it has to be poured into us, like gasoline into a car tank, by the Holy Spirit and Holy Communion. Gradually, both shall change us into a loving people. Thus St. Augustine said, "The Church makes the Eucharist, but the Eucharist makes the Church" by imparting the love that makes the assembly a community of love which the Church is meant to be.

Then the actions of Christ at His ascension are repeated: the priest blesses the people, as Jesus did His apostles; and the priest commissions them to go forth now and be witnesses to the world so that the body of Christ might grow ever more.



"FORGET THE BAKLAVA, MRS. DELANEY. WHY DON'T I JUST RUN DOWN TO THE STORE AND GET SOME TWINKIES?"

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.