

Editorials

Quit? Never!

The New York Times' Linda Greenhouse was partially correct in her analysis of the recent Supreme Court decision once again upholding liberalized abortion. She correctly made the point that the Supreme Court was sending a message to pro-lifers — not only are we ruling against you in the Akron case but we are taking the opportunity to reaffirm strongly the Roe V. Wade decision of 1973.

Up to that point, Ms. Greenhouse and the Times were correct, although both seemed to take subtle editorial delight in the decision (for instance, a photo accompanying the article depicted an abortion under obvious sanitary conditions. Why not show some of the mutilated, discarded infants resulting from many abortions?).

However, when the writer opines that the decision has made "a reaffirmation forceful enough to persuade people that further efforts to change the rules will be futile," she reveals that she does not understand the pro-life mentality. No court on this earth can make abortion moral. Legal, yes; but moral, never!

Perhaps the pro-life battle may have to switch tactics. The judicial system seems futilely recalcitrant at this time. The Hatch-Eagleton Amendment is currently the only viable strategy, although even proponents admit it faces hard times if and when it is ever even debated on the Senate floor. Still, pro-lifers must persevere. Diocesan officials, interviewed for last week's Courier-Journal, seemed of one mind — the latest Supreme Court decision is dismaying but

only indicates that the struggle will be longer. The fight for the rights of the unborn, however, will never be over until enlightenment comes to those who cannot see the injustice being perpetrated.

One diocesan spokesman, Father Jim Hewes, chairman of the Human Life Commission, made an excellent point when he reminded that pro-lifers have one ally able to surmount all obstacles — Our Father in heaven. Father Hewes suggested that the pro-life movement should take a serious and prayerful approach to God Himself that He send the Spirit upon the land to open the eyes of those who will not see.

That spiritual strategy coupled with unstinting perspicacity in more mundane ways will eventually restore sanity, love and justice as regards this painful issue.

Begin today. Now. Write to Sens. Moynihan and D'Amato, reminding them that their help is needed more than ever. Let them and all others know that the struggle persists. And before you do that, say a prayer to the Spirit to guide your efforts.

How to Write

We get letters. We get letters. We get stacks and stacks of letters.

Older readers may remember that's how a segment of the former Perry Como television show used to be introduced. And although, in all honesty, the Courier-Journal does not get stacks AND stacks of letters, we do get our weekly share.

And we love them. We have stacks AND stacks of gratitude for your opinions. Without them, we would

not be able to do our job of communicating, which as anyone knows requires reciprocity.

So why all the falderal? Because the Courier often receives letters which are unprintable — for a variety of reasons. At this very moment, the editor is studying some which fall into this category. There is one opposed to abortion in which the contributor failed to list an address. Another does not have the reader's name. Another is, frankly, not in good taste. Opinions which are consistently critical of others, which are caustic or vitriolic do not perform the writer's aim. Often quite the reverse, they reflect more poorly on the contributor than on the would-be object of disdain.

Anyone wishing to correct perceived faults would do well to realize that more is accomplished by honey than by vinegar, and even more than both of these, by honest and fair exposition.

Then, there are the Shakespeares. Those writers who get so carried away by their turn of phrase that they lose their points in cute side streets of narration. Newspaper reporters have to learn that readers are not as impressed by their writing expertise as much as by simple and clear portrayal. Letter writers should also be aware of this.

Then there other necessary rules, such as length requirements, which must be observed if the opinion space is to be available to all contributors. Some letter writers simply are too long-winded, not only demanding too much space but also losing reader-ship. Few readers are willing to begin reading a letter that looks foreboding. Be concise. Be clear. Be courteous. Remember good taste; diatribe is self-defeating. Be charitable. Most writers are and this newspaper appreciates that fact.

and Opinions

Death Penalty Dilemma

EDITOR:

For the most part, I agree with the National Association of Social Workers stance that "since the death penalty has been discredited as a deterrent to crime, is in practice applied unevenly to the poor and blacks, and is inconsistent with the aspirations of a society that is increasingly concerned with humaneness, it should be eliminated as being unnecessary, ineffective and unworthy of our society."

Yet, I have mixed feelings about the one surviving section of New York State law which mandates execution of inmates convicted of murder while they are already serving life sentence prison terms. The case of Lemuel Smith, who was serving multiple life sentences for previous murders prior to his conviction and recent death sentence for the murder of Corrections Officer Donna Payant, makes me question if capital punishment is always wrong.

Assuming the jury's verdict was correct, how do you punish someone like Smith? Do you simply impose another life sentence, which practically speaking is no punishment at all for a

man already serving consecutive life sentences? Should Smith be isolated in solitary confinement until he dies or becomes elderly/infirm? Should Smith be forced to have a lobotomy or to take psychiatric drugs to alter his behavior? Are such measures less humane than executions? Would capital punishment opponents bear some of the responsibility if Smith should ever kill again? How should Smith be treated if he does kill again?

On the other hand Smith claims to be innocent. The appeals process is just beginning and there are questions about the constitutionality of the law, since it fails to allow a jury or judge to consider possible mitigating circumstances. Because the quickness of death in the electric chair depends largely on individual physiological resistance to the electric current and because it can burn and disfigure its victims, I'm particularly opposed to how New York would execute Smith.

Let's consider the case of Robert Vickers, on Arizona's death row. While serving a lengthy prison sentence, Vickers strangled and stabbed his cell-mate after the latter drank Vickers' Kool-Aid without permission. Sentenced to death, Vickers admitted his

guilt and vowed to commit more murders "until the system kills me." Shortly after, Vickers managed to burn another death row inmate to death, allegedly to avenge a minor insult. Arizona's gas chamber is painless.

The issues are mind-boggling, but those of us who are opposed to the death penalty need to try to come to grips with them.

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Nuns Should Be Deacons

I am not a woman liberator! I am for saving the spiritual awareness that our religious men and women represent. I did not intend my recent letter to be used to promote the women's movement. To me, religion is a spiritual awareness not a male and female issue!

Your heading my letter "Church Unfair to Women" was incorrect and it should be, "Church not a Male-Female Issue." I know my place in the Church — it isn't on the altar! It's too bad married men don't know their place. I hope, in spite of the wrong heading, my point got across to your readers.

Also, what person or persons had the audacity to ask Mother Teresa, a most holy and sacred religious woman, a person that represents the Roman Catholic Church and a recipient of the Nobel Prize if she wanted to be ordained? What little respect for this special woman! The Nobel Prize was given to this great person because her work was deserving of it!

I reiterate the subject isn't whether Mother Teresa wants to or does not want to be ordained. The subject is the Catholic Church needs their spiritual people men and women that devote their lives to God to bless, to serve, to administer and to teach the word and works of the Lord. To put it in plain English, nuns, our spiritual and religious women, are far more important to the Catholic people than married men and should be ordained deacons

in the Roman Catholic Church if there is a shortage of the traditional deacon. We don't need married deacons!
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This Is Freedom?

EDITOR:

Liberty or license — which is which? Which is which, quite a problem in this day of confusion. Since a seemingly prestigious university finds the distinction difficult, what can be expected of mere laymen?

We refer to an article by columnist Mike Royko, "Plumbing the depths of art," in the Chicago Sun Times and the Rochester Times-Union, covering the art show at the University of Illinois.

Obviously the right to exhibit "bad art" by one unknown triumphs over the great segment of the population which considers the treatment desecration. This supposedly is academic freedom!

It is an affront to any right-minded individual of any persuasion, who respects Christian tradition, to portray Christ and the Virgin Mary so irreverently. His followers are no less reviled.

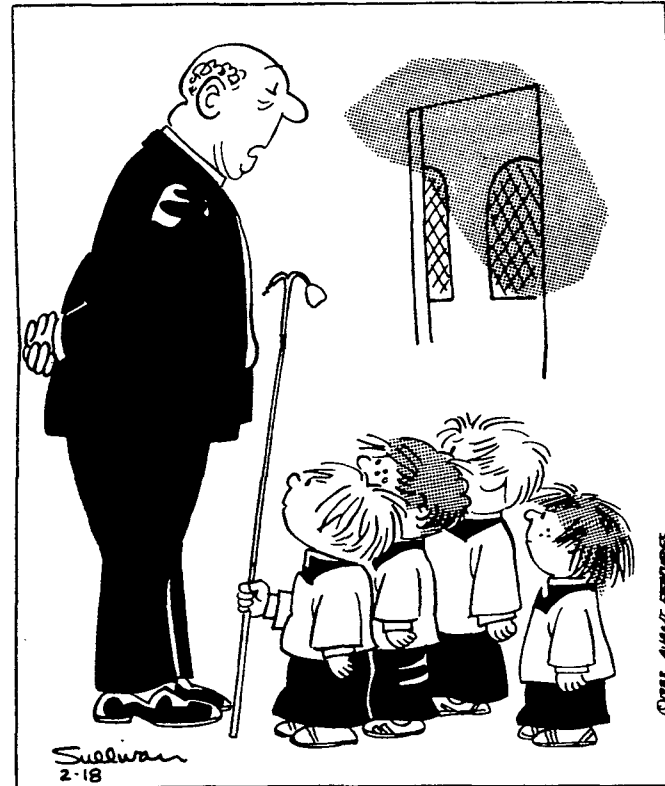
How can an institution of such stature be part of such foul and venomous attacks upon any religion? How does one justify the utter tastelessness, the profanity regarding sacred objects and the senselessness of the display, so unworthy of the ideals a university should foster.

It is pandering to the lowest form of religious bigotry.

The pictures speak for themselves, says the artist. Indeed they do! They tell of a pernicious cancer spreading unchecked within our society.

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Editor's Note: The show included such "art" as a depiction of the crucified Christ with a pig's head and profane depictions of the Blessed Mother.



Nuke Letter Rejected

EDITOR:

The nuclear freeze movement, including the bishops' letter, is a breath in the wind. It is sound and fury signifying nothing. It is not addressed to the only power which is the present determinant in the arms race — Soviet Russia. It is unilateral disarmament. A rabbi recently quoted a Russian proverb, saying: "if you make yourself into a sheep, a wolf will appear nearby."

As long as we keep our guard up, Soviet Russia is not the real enemy — as they cannot stand the devastation of a nuclear exchange, even though, unlike us, they are rapidly furnishing their citizens refuge from nuclear war, a prudent precaution denied us by liberals.

The real problem is that one of the Third World, or some other, nations will accumulate or manufacture an atomic bomb and be tempted to start a nuclear exchange between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and pick up the pieces. Libya's Khadafy is generally regarded as a mad dog who would stop at

nothing.

The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. should combine to control any wildcat nuclear operations by small nations or even by individuals. The nuclear freeze movement hinders, not helps this. The Soviets must be amazed and thrilled at the amount of help they are getting from Americans.

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Editor's Note: The U.S. bishops' pastoral does not call for unilateral agreement. To quote: "We urge negotiations to halt the testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons systems. Not only should steps be taken to end development and deployment but the numbers of existing weapons must be reduced in a manner which lessens the danger of war. Arms control and disarmament must be a process of verifiable agreements especially between two superpowers. While we do not advocate a policy of unilateral disarmament, we believe the urgent need for control of the arms race requires a willingness for each side to take some first steps."

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.