

Editorials

Iran Still at It

From time to time, the Courier-Journal receives mild complaints from readers who wonder why this newspaper continues its reporting on the religious persecution of the Baha'is in Iran when they "are not even Catholic" and there is plenty of oppression of members of our own faith throughout the world.

Several answers are necessary. First, we also try to keep readers aware of the constant persecution of Catholics, whether in Lithuania, Poland, Northern Ireland or our own United States.

But this newspaper, and all people, cannot ignore the persecution of our earthly brothers and sisters whether they are living in South Africa, Iran, the Soviet Union or Chile; whether they are Muslims, Jews or impoverished Indians.

The mentality that executes the Baha'is for religious reasons is the very same mentality that imprisoned Americans for political purposes. To

ignore one is to invite the other. It has been said that as soon as the world looked the other way when the first Jew was put to death because of his beliefs, we invited the Holocaust.

We who have freedom must strengthen it by extending it; the reverse is to risk atrophy of our own power. If the good and reasonable people of the world don't oppose bigotry wherever it boils out, then we will be playing a waiting game until it is our turn.

The latest reports on the Iranian persecution of the Baha'is is dismal; it is intensifying. Members of the religion's administrative bodies are being hunted in Tehran, their homes raided, 22, including 11 women, have been arrested. Their crime: the religion has been banned as a heresy by the Iranian Islamic clergy-government. Though the Baha'i Faith began 140 years ago in Iran, it is a worldwide religion that espouses the oneness of humanity, world peace, the equality of men and women, among other teachings. Apparently, these ideals offend the ayatollah who,

like all dictators, resorts to execution and oppression to prove he is right.

President Reagan, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress have all protested to no avail. The cause seems hopeless unless all humankind raises up in protest against these and all systematic persecutions, regardless of who are the victims.

Tough Act

"I have decided to follow Jesus" reads an apparently increasingly popular bumper sticker.

It would seem that anyone daring enough to attach such a statement to his or her car must be precisely sure that he or she is 1. a very courteous driver and 2. a very adept driver.

Think about it from the viewpoint of the driver of the car following.

and Opinion

Must Obey Magisterium

EDITOR:

In late June, Pope John Paul II provided all the U.S. bishops and the various religious institutes, 1. his letter on their need for holiness, and 2. a copy of "Essential Elements in Church Teaching on Religious Life" which he had prepared with the Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes.

The Holy Father's letter announced that Archbishops John Quinn, Thomas Kelly and Bishop Raymond Lossard were commissioned to facilitate help for the U.S. bishops' pastoral work and, in union with him, (as true shepherds) "to show the Church's profound love and esteem for religious life."

The Holy Father states his concern about the "marked decline in recent years in the number of young people seeking to enter religious life" in the United States. (During the past eight years only one Rochesterian has become a St. Joseph Sister -- the diocese no longer has a seminary; St. John Fisher and Nazareth are now officially non-Catholic colleges).

Pope John Paul II reminds us that "from early colonial days, by the grace of God, the evangelizing zeal of outstanding men and women religious, encouraged and sustained by the persevering efforts of the bishops, have helped the Church to bring the fruits of redemption to your land ... the religious blazed a trail in Catholic education ... elementary to university ... in health care ... love, peace ... social order rooted in the Gospel." The Holy Father is urgently call-

ing the bishops, religious and laity "to holiness, to spiritual renewal, and to conversion and penance" now. "May Mary, the patroness of the United States, the first of the redeemed and the model of all religious support your episcopal ministry ... offering ever greater glory to the Most Holy Trinity."

Characteristically, Pope John Paul II excels in clarity of teaching, in responsibilities, in the personal care as a true shepherd, and in diplomacy. Consequently, any dialogue which bishops and religious choose to entertain does not authorize them to delay obedience to God's Will as proclaimed through His vicar and His Church magisterium ("Essential Elements in Church Teaching on Religious Life").

The Holy Father also asked that those Church magisterium teachings be proclaimed to us -- the laity. In doing so, the many bishops who are threatened with revolts or resignations by some priests and nuns, can depend upon fortitude of the Holy Spirit and support of the faithful laity, priests and sisters.

Should the Courier-Journal readers rely on other news media for Church teaching and continue to be burdened with articles and pictures of lay-image religious?

Joseph J. Murray
38 Wyndover Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

Hate Mail Frustrating

EDITOR:

In the words of Jesus: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" the Catholic Church today is under at-

tack. In the past year, I have received in the mail from an anonymous source, several pamphlets and articles that give false information about our Church. They usually have a heading or picture that gives the impression that it is Catholic literature, but a second glance will clarify its real nature.

The latest one I received has the heading "Catholic Chronicle II -- the Sacrifice of the Mass." Under these headings are the words: "Jesus Dies Again," which is the first solid clue that it is not a Catholic pamphlet. "All rights reserved -- Last Day Ministries" is printed in very fine letters at the end of this article of deceiving information. Quotes are used from Pius IV, "This is the Catholic Church -- Knights of Columbus," the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council -- but all out of context.

We are accused of crucifying Jesus Christ again and again in our daily Mass but one crucifixion was enough to save the whole world. When we offer to the Father, His beloved Son, who died for us, we offer the only perfect sacrifice. We offer up our own pain, suffering, joy and in fact our very life in union with this holy sacrifice that took place on the hill of Calvary centuries ago, yet it remains an effective offering until the end of time.

At the consecration of the Mass, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. This is called transubstantiation -- or the way Our Lord is made present in the Eucharist. Jesus said: "He who eats my body and drinks my blood abides in Me and I in him."

We are also accused of keeping Jesus nailed to the cross because we deeply respect the crucifix. It is by looking at the crucifix that we are reminded of the immense love Jesus had for us, even though we are sinners, that every moment united to His suffering becomes meaningful when offered in reparation for sin, that we are a people redeemed, for even as we ponder His crucifixion we are deeply aware of His resurrection. If He were not risen, life would be in vain.

Our Church is also being persecuted on Main Street where a preacher is often heard shouting, "Not the pope, not the Roman Catholic Church," etc. One thing they preach correctly, "We must accept Jesus personally."

To those who are oppressing our Church, I recommend a personal conversation with

Jesus before reading His word and that they call upon his Holy Spirit to lead them to truth.

Barbara Fischer
77 Harwick Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14609

Editor's Note: Anyone receiving offensive material should contact the Post Office at the following telephone numbers: 263-5819, 263-5823, 263-5838. Have information handy, such as the fine print mentioned in reader Fischer's letter.

Let Birds Control Moths

EDITOR:

The Long Island area included within the gypsy moth spraying in 1957 consisted chiefly of heavily populated towns and suburbs and of some coastal areas with bordering salt marsh. Nassau County is the most densely settled county in New York apart from New York City. In what seems the height of absurdity, the "threat of infestation of the New York City metropolitan area" has been cited as an important justification of the program. The gypsy moth is a forest insect, certainly not an inhabitant of cities. Nor does it live in meadows, cultivated fields, gardens or marshes. Nevertheless, the planes hired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the state Department of Agriculture and Markets showered down the prescribed DDT-in-fuel-oil with impartiality. They sprayed truck gardens and dairy farms, fish ponds and salt marshes. They sprayed the quarter acre lots of suburbia, drenching a housewife trying to cover her garden before the roaring plane reached her, and showering insecticide over children at play and commuters at railway stations. At Setauket, a fine quarter horse drank from a trough in a field which the planes had sprayed; ten hours later it was dead. Cars were spotted with the oily mixture. Birds, fish, crabs and useful insects were killed.

A much saner approach to gypsy moths would be to encourage birds in your area. They control them naturally, eating literally bushels of eggs.

Mary Rita Crowe
1600 East Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14610

Direct Solution

EDITOR:

I read with great interest the U.S. bishops' pastoral on war and peace and was very



GEE, YOU MUST HAVE THE WRONG ADDRESS. I'M A NOVICE IN A RELIGIOUS ORDER.

surprised to find they ignored Our Blessed Lady's instructions on this matter. In the apparitions at Fatima beginning 1917, Our Blessed Mother is most explicit: "Say the rosary EVERY DAY to earn peace for the world and the end of war."

How can such a direct solution be overlooked?

Susan Verluys
235 Hill Top Lane
Spencerport, N.Y. 14559

Police Issue Not for Church

EDITOR:

I would like to express my wholehearted approval of the recent letter in your paper by Sheriff Andrew Meloni regarding the issue of Metro Police and Church involvement in that issue. Sheriff Meloni stated the position for non-involvement of a Church in a masterfully objective way. The Department of Justice and Peace of our diocese seems to have a knack for involving Church in partisan issues that tend to polarize instead of extend the Kingdom of God. May I cite past experiences -- viz. Farah slacks and Sibley's, Hess Oil Co. incident, lettuce boycott and presently the Stouffer Hotel boycott. (Boycotts are a dangerous and negative instrument with which to achieve any objective.)

The Metro Police issue is complicated and has many diverse factors that are beyond the simple "city vs. suburbs" tag that the Department of Justice and Peace has placed upon it. I served proudly as pastor of an urban church for 12 years

(Blessed Sacrament) and did not hesitate to involve myself and/or church in political issues that had direct bearing on Church ministry (e.g. Pure Waters taxes and Genesee Expressway). I continue to have a sensitivity to the conditions that make urban living such a hassle for so many. I have tried to impart that sensitivity in many ways to the people of the suburban village of Fairport. But I feel, along with Sheriff Meloni, that the official Church should keep its hands off this highly politicized issue (whether by letter, pulpit or press). God's Kingdom is extended not by polarizing but by unifying.

Father John P. Norris
Pastor
Assumption of Our Lady Church
20 East Ave.
Fairport, N.Y. 14450

Christianity And Priorities

EDITOR:

Where are Christian priorities when they incarcerate hardened criminals at a cost that would feed a host of hungry children? How can Christians dispute the Bible's demand for capital punishment; so explicit are its mandates that not even accidental homicide is tolerated. It (the Bible) has the only solution to the disaster that has befallen morality. Jehovah has not changed from all eternity. Be assured he is not about to yield to human fancies at this time.

Edward A. Veith
2952 Atlantic Ave.
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

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.