

Editorials

The Pill And Cancer

"The growing evidence that the pill has residual and long-term effects on health needs to be taken seriously and discussed nationally."

That ominous advice is not taken from some Church document. It was offered in a British medical magazine, *Lancet*. In a report on birth control pills, the magazine said that separate studies in the United States and Britain support evidence of a link between birth control pills and cancer.

According to the Associated Press, one research group reports that women who use oral contraceptives appear to have a 75 percent greater risk of developing cervical cancer than do women who use intrauterine devices. Another group of researchers said women under 25 who used such birth control pills with high hormone levels for at least five years are four times more likely to develop breast cancer than are other women.

The AP describes *Lancet* as "the authoritative British medical magazine."

How did the British Health Department respond? Typically, it said the studies were important but inconclusive and that there is no reason for women to stop using the oral contraceptives. It might just as well have been the American Medical Association.

Several things need to be said about all of this. Unfortunately no one will pay much attention to a

Catholic newspaper any more than to a Catholic bishop, a conference of Catholic bishops or a Catholic pope. Equally sad is the fact that no one who can make an impression will do anything about it.

First, it should be made clear that the reason that nothing is done by medical associations is that there is too much money to be made by members, that is, to speak plainly, by doctors. Then, too, doctors have never been courageous enough to stand up either socially or professionally to organizations such as Planned Parenthood. Nor do they take the time to understand the drugs they dispense.

Another point to be made, and the United States surgeon general is the sensitive agent, is that with such evidence, birth control pills should be labeled as cigarettes are: "Warning: The surgeon general has determined that birth control pills are dangerous to your health."

Why not? Think about it.

The next step might be to establish legally that groups such as Planned Parenthood and medical associations and perhaps doctors themselves are liable if they prescribe or advise the use of obvious cancer-producing drugs.

Why not? Think about it.

A point which is germane -- religious strictures are often more than just moral. They most of the time are rooted in concern for good health. Plainly, natural birth control is wise. It is also nonprofit which accounts for much of its lack of popularity in medical circles and pseudo-health organizations such as Planned Parenthood.

Sad but true. Doctors are often poorly educated in matters of health. Practically speaking, it is easier and quicker and thus more lucrative to go along with the tide and prescribe whatever is the latest drug on the market than to steep themselves in true concern for their clients -- the term patient is consciously avoided because users of the pill are mostly not ill, at least not yet.

And the danger is real. In the British research, a study group of 6,834 women who were using birth control pills was compared to 3,154 who were using the IUD (that was the researchers' choice, not ours). Among pill users, there were 110 cases of cervical cancer, including 13 cases of advanced cancer that had begun to spread, according to the AP. Among IUD users, there were 26 cases of cancer or pre-cancer but no advanced cases. It would be have been more interesting if a third group were, those who used no birth control devices, were studied.

Will something be done? Probably not. But in loving concern, messages, or even this editorial, should be sent to the surgeon general or to your local politician on the state or federal level. Ask them to work to affix a health warning on birth control pills. Ask them to make it possible to sue any medical practitioner or official (American Medical Association) or quasi-official (Planned Parenthood) agency which promotes cancerous substances.

Or perhaps some woman whose cancer can be traced to the pill should originate a law suit against the medical house which sells the drug, the doctor or the organization which promotes its use. Hit them in the pocketbook. That's where it hurts them most.

and Opinions

The Present Violence

EDITOR:

The missiles are in the silos, on the submarines, and in aircraft, ready to destroy human life.

Should they be fired, people like you and me, will be vaporized, melted and burned; skin will slide off their bodies; they will be maimed, blinded, poisoned and die...

That such potential exists, that the weapons are already in place while others are being deployed, and that such a catastrophe could happen is more than the mind can bear and more than we who protest can accept.

To avoid this potential for such great evil, we voice our opposition in order to stop any such possible destruction of human life -- a destruction that could affect all life and would primarily include innocent life.

Nevertheless, despite our protests, we must be willing to defend and protect life and human life in all the places it is being threatened and destroyed, or our position remains merely rhetorical, inconsistent and inauthentic.

Yet, this reality of the evil destruction of human life is actually taking place. This is not potential evil destruction -- it is presently taking place on a massive scale.

As the missiles and bombs sit on their pads in the missile silos, on the submarines and in the aircraft, millions of human beings have been burned, cut to pieces, maimed, suffocated and left to die. The weapons of the curette, the suction tube, the saline solution and those instruments used in a hysterotomy are all being deployed and doing their work. These weapons are scraping human beings from the uterine wall and tearing their bodies into pieces of arms, legs and heads; they are sucking these pieces of developing babies into jars; they are poisoning and burning human beings through an injection of a highly concentrated salt

solution that babies absorb through their lungs and which slowly shrivels them up to die. These weapons are being used directly to attack human beings with the intent to kill them immediately, and even if they survive this attack, they are simply left with their wounds to die.

These victims are part of us -- of our human family. Just as it is easy for some of us who are concerned for our nation's security, protection, and defense to justify and rationalize the amassing of nuclear weapons, so, too, the human mind can become twisted to first tolerate, then accept, and even encourage and applaud the killing of human beings through abortion.

The difference between these two heinous evils -- the possibility of nuclear war and the reality of abortion -- is that while we are working and hoping that one does not happen... we silently allow and give permission to the other -- and it is happening now, at this very moment.

If we are the true seekers and makers of peace, then we will begin to be ACTIVE in defending and protecting the millions of humans who are not merely being threatened but are victims of a violence which is presently taking place.

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Fatima Key To Peace

EDITOR:

In recent weeks, the *Courier-Journal* has given much attention to the general concern for world peace. While rallies and marches may waken the public to the need for action, they will not bring peace. Prayer will. At Fatima, Our Lady warned the world of the dangers it now faces and told us how to achieve world peace. She promised that and the conversion of Russia if we would pray the rosary every day and

make the Five First Saturdays.

Our diocese does have the family rosary for peace broadcast each day, but little else is done to promote the Fatima devotions. When will our diocese be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary? Is there a timetable for each parish to be so consecrated? What does the *Courier-Journal* do to make the people of the Rochester diocese aware of Fatima message?

Bringing the Pilgrim Virgin to our parishes and reminding our people to pray as Our lady asked us will do far more to bring peace to the world than any series of marches and rallies.

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We Must Rely On Strength

EDITOR:

When the U.S. bishops wrote their pastoral on the "Challenge of Peace," did someone happen to tell them about the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Aug. 27, 1928, which was signed by 63 nations and which was the high point of the peace, disarmament and weapons-freeze movement of the 1920s and 1930s? However, the treaty was ignored by Japan in 1931 when it invaded Manchuria, by Italy in 1934 when it invaded Ethiopia, by Germany and Russia in 1939 when they invaded Poland and by Japan, again, in 1941 when it bombed Pearl Harbor. World War II was a result of all of these events.

Have the bishops read the "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," in which Hitler, in a speech to the Reichstag on April 28, 1939, answered a letter from President Franklin Roosevelt asking for assurance that Hitler and Mussolini would not attack or invade any of 31 independent nations? The laughter of the audience grew louder as each country was mentioned.

Now, another generation later, we have seen the Soviet empire gradually invade small countries in all areas of the world, the result of which is the loss of freedoms,

particularly religious, in those very countries.

While the bishops seek a peaceful solution to world problems (a noble endeavor), we must take a close look at what peace really is. For us Americans, peace is the absence of hostility. For the U.S.S.R., it is the absence of resistance. Once we cease to resist, we become forced to be dominated by a Godless ideology which is the ultimate, well-publicized goal of the Soviet Union. The only real method of resistance which will assure of us peace is our strength as a nation. Our country and our faith have survived, because there were people who were willing to defend and fight for the very things we believe in.

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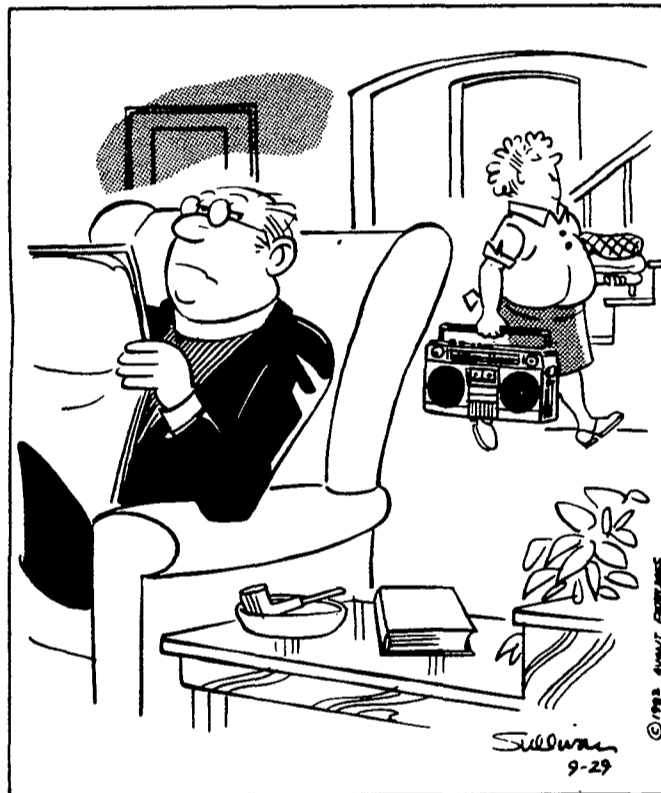
Editor's Note: The letter also was signed by Raymond Mueller and Mary Lou Reifsnnyder.

Living Liturgy

EDITOR:

It is Friday, the day before the peace rally at Seneca. Tomorrow, Sheila, Peter and I plan to attend. I am sitting in my chair struggling with one question: How can I take part in something that has the potential of pulling our Christian community apart? This question was prompted by the fact that people I respect, love and worship together with, feel that what I am doing is wrong.

This caused me to take a hard look at my motivations for going. Was it because I wanted to be in the spotlight? My one-year-old son? A deep searching for God's will in my life? The profound effect that Sheila's love has had upon me? A belief that the Christian message of love and peace does make a difference? Or a reverence for life? All of these figure into the picture, but the one that stood out the most for me was -- a Living Liturgy. My hope and prayer for tomorrow is that "we break this bread with reverence and give it to each other for eating just as another person once broke those loaves with us and



asked us not to forget" (from "Seasons of the Heart," Page 127, Broken and Crushed, Copyright 1979 Silver Burdett).

And that our ending prayer was, "We have broken bread with tears in our eyes. And we have broken it when our hearts felt nothing, but we have broken it just as you asked us to do. We are still trying to understand what it means, but we haven't

forgotten" (see source as above).

Tomorrow, we the Christian community, will be breaking bread, whether we are there or not.

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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.