

Editorials

Talk First

The United Nations, and rightly so, "is picking a fight with dozens of heavyweights in the entertainment world, including Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles and the Vienna Boys Choir," as the National Catholic News Service put it.

The U.N. is accusing the show business folks of undermining its efforts to ostracize South Africa for its discriminatory racial policies by entertaining in that country.

The U.N. Center Against Apartheid warned the entertainers that if they seek profit from what the U.N. called the system of inhuman oppression of the black people there, "they will not be allowed to benefit from patronage of countries and people committed to the struggle against apartheid."

The U.N. position is correct. People doing business with South Africa are, regardless of motives, supporting a racially biased societal and governmental system. Anyone with common sense should understand this fact.

However, a word of caution seems necessary. Let's hope that no one jumps to a tangential conclusion that these entertainers are bigoted themselves. Frank Sinatra, although his public posture may be less than impeccable on other counts, can hardly be considered a bigot. Nor could Ray Charles, a black himself. Many of the other entertainers also are black.

Bigotry is not their crime. But a lack of sensitivity to an important issue is.

Perhaps if the U.N. agency goes about its pursuit in a less bellicose manner than by issuing warnings and referring to "sinning," as it did, the show business people would be more inclined to admit their mistake.

It is a situation that requires resolve (that everything possible be done to let South Africa know that its apartheid system is reprehensible) and tact, by giving the entertainers the opportunity to show that they are willing on their own to disown past errors.

No Place to Hide

A Soviet pilot shoots down a commercial airliner and 269 innocent people are killed.

A mistake, the Russians say.

A U.S. jet bombs a hospital in Grenada and between 20 and 46 innocent people are killed.

A mistake, the Americans say.

Mistakes. But that's the point. In a distrustful world, armed to the teeth, such mistakes are invited. Though the number of people killed aboard the jet or the number of patients killed in the hospital may not be staggering in comparison with how many more be killed in a similar situation, one person killed is one too many.

Imagine a nuclear mistake. How many innocents

will perish? Maybe right here in the United States. Maybe right here in the Rochester diocese.

Isn't this possibility all by itself enough to motivate all to seek a nuclear freeze as first step to the erasure of nuclear arms from the world? Increasingly none of us is safe. Anywhere.

At Last

After years of dragging its collective feet, this nation has finally declared a national holiday in honor of its latter-day prophet Martin Luther King. President Reagan made it official last week when he signed a bill creating the holiday on the third Monday of January, beginning 1986.

The scene was emotional. Strains of "We Shall Overcome" wafted through the Rose Garden as the president and Coretta King, widow of the assassinated civil rights leader, stood by.

The irony is difficult to ignore. Reagan, who has had reservations about the holiday and who has made controversial statements about it, became, reluctantly, the president to make it official. Still he hit the proper note when he said, "We will see the day when Dr. King's dream comes true, and in his words, 'All of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.'"

It is to be hoped that President Reagan, in this regard, will prove also to be a prophet.

and Opinions

It's a Mad, Mad World

EDITOR:

A glimpse into "progressive" American culture:

Recently a company mailed me, rather, my "computer-conceived wife," an apparently innocent catalog. With this catalog came a threat that if a purchase was not made from the selection presented this would be "her" last free catalog. (All the while "she" nor I had requested the dumb thing nor even purchased from the particular corporation in question. But still we were intimidated and I was left in the lurch as to how to console a non-existent spouse.)

Add to this ludicrous instance a further insult to intelligence: my "wife" was offered a deck of nude female playing cards (something every homemaker, even if she subsists solely in the banks of a computer, wants?). This is what a Catholic in the world has to confront: martyrdom of the spirit if not of one's sanity. One is expected to be lifeless and mindless in a mechanical sense: not the least aware of obtrusion, oblivious to brashness and blind to absurdity.

There was irony here, and as "hilarious" in an offbeat way as when my mother

played proxy for my father so he could pay his taxes due for the year of his death till the day of his death. This is the government's version of resurrection from the dead.

(Even in the grave the poor corpse isn't free of taxes. Haven't you ever wondered why there are so few "Rest in Peace" inscriptions on tombstones and markers of recent? The answer -- dearest Uncle Sam won't let the corpse get cold until it has its final bleeding. Mustn't be so untidy as to leave a loose end as dying without six-week notice given to Unk of your departure! It's downright unpatriotic!)

Ecclesiastes wrote, "I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes walked on the ground like slaves." (10:7; NAB)

As often is the case, when one secures the services of "professionals" an about-face is made and one seems almost to relinquish one's rights over one's body, or auto, or house, or whatever. Suddenly, the "servant" is greater than the "master" and the "master" is guilty of intrusion.

So it goes, so it goes. How apropos that 60s movie entitled, "It's a MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD World." God spare us!

Donald Blais
6 Fondiller Ave.
Penfield, N.Y. 14625

No Gain Without Pain

EDITOR:

I was a little concerned when I first heard about the bishop's visit to the anti-nuclear rally. I was worried about the civil disobedience portion of the affair. Fortunately, the bishop disavowed this aspect and reaffirmed his loyalty and affection for the armed forces and the country.

It occurred to me that too many of us are armchair experts. We can talk for hours and solve all the world's problems but we won't walk 10 feet to carry food to the hungry, join discussion and action groups or write to our legislators. We are not really doers of the word. We are no longer living in times that can endure pious platitudes and silent consent.

I am reminded of Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker, who fought for labor unions and workers' rights. They were unpopular causes in the 20s and 30s. We know how much better off the worker is today.

As he told us, Bishop Clark is completely aware of the calculated risk but if he always followed the "safest way," he would be relegated to an executive always dictating letters to his secretary. A letter is one thing; a personal appearance is quite another.

Bishop Clark's participation in the rally is certainly not a comfortable enterprise. I believe a poem by Robert H. Schuller is very appropriate:

No Gain without Pain

You reminded me again, today Lord,
There is no gain without pain.
I must be making headway because I hurt
Hallelujah!
Amen.

Daniel L. Davis
92 Parkwood Lane
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

Holy Year Suggestions

EDITOR:

The Holy Year of Redemption is more than halfway to its conclusion and

before the snow flies perhaps all those who have not been able to make use of this special grace should give it considerable thought. We need not travel to Rome to gain the jubilee indulgence. We can obtain it from our prison cell, hospital bed or the confines of a nursing home. In these cases, the desire is sufficient along with the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation and prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father. For those of us who are well and able we need not venture out of our own territory for each area of the diocese has its local designated pilgrimage church which has been listed in the Courier and is available to us for the asking.

Human nature being as it is -- full of good intentions but yet prone to procrastination and deference to the future -- needs to be stimulated and encouraged by others to action. Perhaps we need more organized planning in this regard from our parishes, schools and individual families. Churches organize groups for many events both religious and social; a parish pilgrimage would be something all would benefit from. Our parochial school and CCD classes plan special liturgies and walks for all types of causes; what could be better than a whole class gathered together in pilgrimage to some special spot of their own choosing? Families are still enjoying a special fall outing; why not combine it with a place of assigned pilgrimage.

If all Catholics throughout the world would avail themselves of this special Holy Year of Redemption we could soon be at peace with our God, ourselves and one another. We would be disposing our souls to the saving power of God through penance and reconciliation -- we would obtain victory over the moral evils of today and return to God in total conversion.

The Holy Year indulgence can be applied to ourselves or to the souls in Purgatory. What better time than November, the month of the Holy Souls, to make our first or perhaps our second pilgrimage -- this time for a special deceased soul.

We will truly be able to give thanks to God this Thanksgiving Day for gran-



"WELL, IT APPEARS SOMEONE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THAT LITTLE THEFT LAST NIGHT."

ing us the privilege of celebrating with Him the 1,950th anniversary of His death and resurrection for the redemption of the world.
Mrs. Robert Leahy
20 White Birch Circle
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

'High Frontier' The Answer

EDITOR:

Repeatedly, in the annals of protest demonstrations, since 1960 the uninformed and the misinformed are exploited by those who know exactly what they are doing.

The orchestrators have focused attention on nuclear horrors and thereby obscured the primary issue, the moral obligation to defend our country.

If these demonstrators were properly informed and honestly motivated, they would encourage support for the non-nuclear defense system "High Frontier." This plan was developed by Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham (Ret.) with a team of leading scientists, space engineers, strategists and economists.

Congressman Ron Paul has described this concept as a "practical and affordable anti-missile defense system based on high technology." He said: "Far from inflicting

wanton destruction on innocent people in other countries, 'High Frontier' accomplishes one purpose and one purpose only -- it defends the American people and their homeland from a Soviet first strike by long-range missiles by knocking out these missiles in space." This system relies on heat-seeking missiles for deployment from a system of satellite missile interceptors.

During the third annual World Balance of Power Conference in London in July 1983, Gen. Graham reviewed the High Frontier concepts, pointing out that it would serve to unite the allies rather than divide them because it is a global system and has within it the means to defend Europe and Japan from Soviet intermediate-range missiles like the Soviet SS-20.

The uninformed and misinformed are responsible for a deplorable waste of time that could have been used in a practical pursuit of peace and security. They are also guilty of placing an unconscionable financial burden on the communities which were the scenes of their mindless activities.

G. Newberry
160 Azalea Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14620

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.