

Editorials

Free at Last

Martin Luther King Day. A nation which prides itself on its mixed heritage finally has the opportunity to pay honor to one of its minority heroes.

Although Martin Luther King Day will not be an official national holiday until 1986, it has already been observed in various ways in many communities.

Back in 1963 when Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech he could not have dreamed that the various blocs of diverse Americans for whom he worked and eventually died would someday honor him as a national leader. To be honest, and putting it mildly, not all are pleased with the impending holiday. But it is a reality nonetheless and the huge majority of Americans have a new reason to celebrate.

It is incumbent on all Americans, all Christians, all people of goodwill not merely to honor the memory of a great man. It is our duty to revivify the principles for which the Rev. King lived and died.

For instance, in a pastoral letter, Cardinal Timothy Manning of Los Angeles called on the more than 2 million Catholics in his archdiocese to use the day to reflect on the need for racial harmony. According to National Catholic News Service, he asked his people "to pray for the courage to live the principle of human dignity, for we are many people living as one people of faith."

At the risk of sounding trite, it might be noted that one of the salubrious side effects of the holiday will be the end to the longtime nagging of this newspaper for such a day. Our readers are thus "free at last" in a different, albeit small, sense.

Another Rev.

And while we remember the contributions of one black minister, another has moved onto the national stage -- the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Though at this point, it seems unlikely that he will even get his party's nomination much less the presidency, it should be noted that he has made unexpectedly long strides in a short time -- particularly in the release of Lt. Goodman from a Syrian prison.

While this newspaper does not engage in partisan politics and we hope that our readers will infer no political endorsement of any kind for the Rev. Jackson, it is nonetheless pleasant to realize that a black man -- and a minister of God at that -- has become a realistic, though a longshot, contender for our nation's highest office.

This development augurs well for all American minorities.

and Opinion

Meese Defended

EDITOR:

As a Catholic and a member of St. Joseph's Church in Penfield, I was shocked at the bad attitude your newspaper took against Mr. Edwin Meese who told the truth that some people line up at soup kitchens not because they are hungry but because the food is free. Your newspaper owes Mr. Meese an apology as you are very wrong as there are too many actual freeloaders looking for a free meal ticket at the expense of others. Your newspaper pays too much attention to the do-gooder liberal point of view many times when you should not.

There is no question that the truly needy need help and should receive help. I don't like it that some welfare people squander their money on lottery tickets, OTB, liquor, etc., and their children are left to fend for themselves and these children sometimes only get a good meal at unnecessary free school lunch programs. We also now have too many situations of young single women who purposely get pregnant to have children to get welfare as it is easier and more cost effective than working for a living. We may need more welfare for the truly needy and less for those who should be fit for work.

John D. Brankacz Sr.
48 Wishing Well Circle
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

Forum of Central-Western New York. This is to clarify some of the statements made in that article.

Fidelity Forum of CWNV is not organized as a "pro-defense" group. It is made up of chartered associations of Catholic laymen (there are 30-40 nationally) who have organized to address issues affecting the church.

Our Fidelity Forum chose, at this time, to address the bishops' pastoral. We are not "pro-nuke", but, to the extent that nuclear weapons are a necessary part of our defense, we support their existence in our arsenal. Our individual members most certainly support a strong defense system for our country. One of our speakers, Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, U.S. Army (Ret.), presented his High Frontier program. This is a proposal for defense of all missiles that pass through outer space. It is non-nuclear and provides a sane and moral alternative to the insane and immoral concept of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction). It has already been judged feasible by a team of scientists, engineers, strategists, and economists. It can be accomplished primarily by off-the-shelf current technology and will be relatively inexpensive to implement. It will virtually eliminate the possibility of a first nuclear strike by intercontinental ballistic missiles.

George Green
4 Salem Court
Fairport, N.Y. 14450

occurred more than 15 years ago. In spiritual darkness, the U.S. bishops helped pave the way for false teaching and rejections of Catholic faith and Church authority, by the priests and religious. In 1972, Pope Paul VI exhorted the bishops that "the smoke of Satan is in the foregone conclusion for legalizing abortion in 1973. Now in the winter of spiritual darkness, disordered perceptions are exhibited by some bishops.

Disordered perceptions of the nature of a national conference of Catholic bishops led the NCCB (Nov. 14-17) into the delusion that they were exercising "Church collegiality," and were empowered to reject the Church Canon Laws on Religious Life. By contrast with this delusion, 75 percent of the respondents to a recent poll by Catholic Views Broadcasts, Inc. (New York) want the Church to exercise sterner measures for obedience by the U.S. priests and religious.

Priests and religious who do not practice Catholic faith should no longer be addressed as "Father," "Brother," or "Sister" -- their disordered perceptions of excellence cannot be fostered or further harbored. In "The Art of War" (required reading by the Soviet Officer Corps), the author, Sun Tzu, states: "Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. The best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact."

Does the Rochester Catholic diocese provide any visible evidence that its parishes and schools have not been taken intact with supreme excellence?

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

Abortion Is Ignored

EDITOR:

A volley of accusations have passed concerning the Church's, most especially the bishops', prioritizing between the issue of possible nuclear holocaust and the current practice of abortion and its effect on mankind and our relationship with God.

I know abortion is a very real issue, right here in our diocese, our parishes, our schools, our neighborhoods and, yes, in our homes.

During the "Respect for Life" week, a young priest in our parish starkly exposed

our sin of saying, "Yes, I am against abortion. Of course it is a sin against God and man." But what do we do to support that statement, that belief?

We make it easier for young women to silently run to the abortuary to end an unexpected, inconvenient, unwanted pregnancy than to come to us, the Christian community, and say they need help to bring a child, God's child, into the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Buonemani asked if abortion is ignored. I asked parents when was the last time they spoke to their child about abortion, morality and sexuality; or do they say, "You'd better not come into this house pregnant."

When was the last time they checked the guidelines and moral undertones of what their schools are teaching with regard to abortion vs. adoption or possible single parenthood? When was the last time the clergy addressed, on a practical level, the issue of abortion and its consequences to the parish? If all of these things have been taken care of, fine. If not, I ask all to examine why not.

I have worked with young women contemplating abortion. Our society tells them it is the easy choice, it is the "right" choice. It is up to us to offer the alternative -- life. Not just by verbal consensus but by active participation in teen counseling to prevent pregnancy, by providing homes and funds to these young mothers and by educating our public, on a daily basis, to the magnitude and consequences of abortion in our community, here and now.

We can't simply say, "Oh, those right to life fanatics or Birthright volunteers will handle it." We, each individual Christian, must take an active role, every day, in ending the horror of abortion.

Is abortion ignored? Weighing the issue, I say yes for the most part.

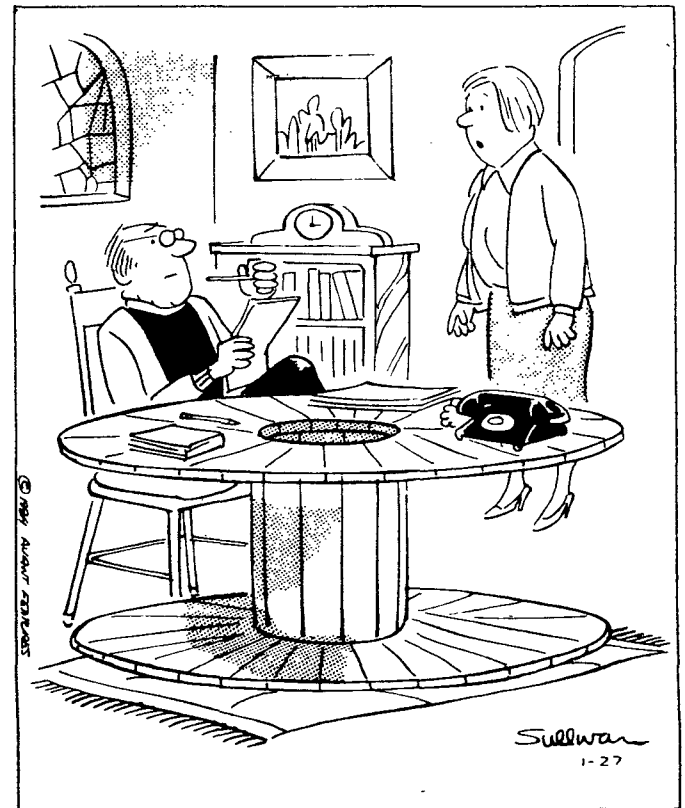
Frances Ann McCarthy
58 Sodus St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14609

Brazil Sisters Send Thanks

EDITOR:

As we celebrate once again the hope born in all humanity with the birth of Jesus, we pray, too, for the Church in the Diocese of Rochester.

We are grateful to you, the people of the diocese, who continue to manifest such generous care and concern for your brothers and sisters in the Third World.



"HOW WAS THE COLLECTION THIS WEEK?"

It is because of this Child born to us, this Prince of Peace, that we hold firmly the hope and belief that one day all will live in a world where all are one in Christ.

Be sure of a continued remembrance in our prayers. We ask that you remember us and our people in your prayer, too.

May God give you His choicest blessings in the New Year.

The Sisters of St. Joseph in Brazil:
Sisters Barbara Orczyk, Catherine Foos, Cristel Burgmaier, Dolores Turner, Elaine Hollis, Ellen Kuhl, Jean Bellini, Katherine Popowich, Marlene Roeger, Suzanne Wills

To date, the appeal has raised \$72,000 of a \$90,000 objective. To help meet our objective, givers can send contributions to the Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities annual Christmas Appeal, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604, any time of the year.

We thank all participants in our program for being so concerned with all the beautiful people we serve.

Maurice Tierney
Director
Catholic Charities
Diocese of Rochester

No Cakes For Jesus?

EDITOR:

I'm a lame old grandfather like a Model T Ford.

I listen to the highly educated schofars. I also listen to the crying needs of a child.

I think somewhere in the Bible you will find these words -- out of the mouths of babes comes wisdom.

She is only 3 1/2 years old. Her question stunned me. She asked, "How come nobody ever bakes Baby Jesus a birthday cake -- it's his birthday."

You have a large reading Christian audience. Maybe they can provide the answer. Happy holidays.

John Yukas
RD 1, Box 269
Martville, N.Y. 13111

More Opinion Page 18

Straightening The Record

EDITOR:

In your issue of Nov. 2, you reported on the Fidelity

Bishops Need Stronger Hand

EDITOR:

"The Day After" for the Catholic Church in the U.S.

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.