

Editorials

What to Pray?

While many in the United States, and rightly so, decry the unjust Jan. 22, 1973 ruling of our Supreme Court legalizing abortion, this country is not alone in its infamy.

Picture this grisly scene. A closet at the state-run clinic in Milan, Italy. A lonely priest, kneeling, saying prayers over garbage bags containing bits and pieces of what would have been human beings if allowed to be born. The bags are labeled "obvular material," another euphemism for destroyed ovaries.

The closet is next to an operating room where voluntary abortions are performed.

Father Angelo Bozzi, chaplain at the clinic, sought and was given permission to bless the remains "to affirm the fact that these little children are human beings, are persons." He uses the prayers normally used for unbaptized children but feels that other prayers should be written for this eerie purpose.

The bags eventually are buried in a communal cemetery, presumably in unmarked tombs.

Surely God looks over these unnamed, unnoted and almost unlamented individuals but that lonely chaplain in Milan who has taken on such a thankless

mission is correct: A sensitive prayer is needed to be said over these little people whose most basic right has been expunged by the state.

Stress and Press

With more than all due respect to Cardinal Jozef Glomp of Poland, with all empathy and consideration as well, it still must be said that he seemingly serves not just cause, by his recent criticism of the "Western press" for, in his view, concentrating so much on the political aspects of the Church's activities. Perhaps it is the extreme tension under which he lives, or the tightrope he must walk, but it would seem that he is being less than grateful for the Western press coverage of the Church's political activities -- nonesuch will be forthcoming from the Eastern press.

He says Western journalists focus on the political and ignore the efforts of the Church to make "good triumph over evil." That kind of remark could come from the puppet government in Poland or its masters in Moscow. The Western press is neither all good nor all bad but it is far superior to that which charades

under the guise of news purveyors behind the Iron Curtain. And what person interested in international affairs, particularly in this time of John Paul II, could ignore the weighty, important and decisive role the Church is playing in world politics today -- from Poland to Moscow to Argentina to El Salvador to Africa to Lebanon to Washington and back. Never in recent history has the church in Rome played such a respected role. The press is only reflecting its awareness of this fact. Surely, Cardinal Glomp is not helping in the struggle against the tyranny behind the Iron Curtain by criticizing the "Western press."

Again it is not pleasant, and perhaps not even fair, to find fault with a man under such obvious pressure and stress and who may be under even more dire threats as regards his countrymen. But, also in the interest of honesty, he has raised protest from his own flock when he transferred a Warsaw suburb to a distant rural parish. This, of course, was duly reported in the Western press and conceivably could have spurred the cardinal to his criticism.

In any case, it would seem to serve no good cause to take up the cudgels against the Western press when there are so many more culpable targets about, namely the subjugated press of Warsaw and beyond to the East.

and Opinions

Lent: Time To Change

EDITOR:

With Lent here, I've been asked what I would like to do.

I really haven't thought about giving up anything for the 40 days of Lent. Instead of giving anything up, it's what I hope to become for the rest of my life -- a better Christian, a more loving wife, mother, daughter, sister and neighbor.

My prayer is to be filled with compassion, love, mercy and forgiveness for my fellow man. I hope to become more Christ-like and see people with my heart and not with my eyes. If I can become some of the above then I will be able to empty myself of the human and God will be able to fill me with the divine.

In this way, I will be able to give up my jealousy, hatred, unforgiveness of others, selfishness and wrong judging of my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Perhaps then I will be the person Jesus wants me to be. Not only during Lent, but for the rest of my life.

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Disagrees With Book

EDITOR:

In Mitch Finley's review of the book "Embodied Love" he tells us that the book makes clear that married people first become intimate with God in being intimate with one another. I submit this to be a reversal of sequence. Among its fallacies is the suggestion that intimacy with God in a short period of time may be the rule rather than the rare exception. While God may choose to gift a few with a sudden knowledge of Himself, most of us ascend to that height rather slowly on the sturdy rungs of desire, proven fidelity and a prayerful way of life.

Intimacy with God -- the sharing of Divine Love -- is the stanch base on which our Christian Love for one another is structured. And Christian Love encompasses a capacity for self-denial for "other." To enter the Holy Sacrament of Marriage without the forbearance which comes with knowledge of God is analogous to a

non-swimmer diving in deep waters without a lifesaver. It is an evident, and deplorable reality, that the one-hour-a-week Christians are more vulnerable when tried. Seeking God in prayer is habitually rewarded by sanctifying grace which draws us ever closer to Him.

While it is always timely and most commendable to seek an intimate relationship with God, for the understanding, compassion and self-sacrifice that may be demanded in marriage a practiced discipline at the start is a very special blessing. Surely to rely on the sex life of a marriage as a major source of its success is to overrate sex-power, unless it is completely altruistic.

Without the fine but enduring thread of love, fused with Love, the probability of rising to that culmination which is an expression of sharing in Divine Love is greatly diminished. Incidentally, in a successful marriage this precious experience is so cherished that the partners involved would be loathe to make of it a public and earthy spectacle.

May the Father Greeleys and other authors of our times, who would write of the Holy Sacrament of Marriage in a sensational fashion, take note.

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Need Homilies On Abortion

EDITOR:

No one questions the fact that Bishop Clark and the state bishops are against abortion but I do wonder with what fervor they oppose it.

The laity can write articles and talk about abortion until we are blue in the face but it will not do as much good as a two-minute message from the pulpit once in a while.

If the bishop and most of the priests in this diocese don't want to seem too strident in their views on abortion, they are doing a good job. If they were any more low-key on their approach to this issue we wouldn't know abortion existed.

I don't enjoy writing an article such as this. As you said in rebuttal to Mr. Messmer's article of Feb. 15 (which was very good), it serves no purpose to find

Sensenbrenner: ERA Must Be Amended

EDITOR:

The 98th Congress is expected to again consider House Joint Resolution 1, the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

In the early 1970s, this same amendment received my support when it was before the Wisconsin State Assembly. I was a cosponsor of a similar state ERA which passed the Wisconsin Legislature but which was defeated in a Wisconsin referendum. However, congressional approval of the ERA and my own support came before the U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Roe v. Wade*, where a right to abortion was somehow found in the U.S. Constitution.

Thus, as the ranking majority member of the House Judiciary subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights, I was hoping the hearing record would provide answers to the many unanswered questions which caused the ERA not to be ratified by the requisite number of states. Unfortunately, the extensive testimony of 42 witnesses, while leaving these questions unanswered, raised new concerns about the impact of the ERA.

Perhaps the most basic unanswered question revolved around the ERA's impact on existing federal and state laws which prohibit taxpayer funds from being used for abortions. Pro-abortion advocates in several states have tried to use almost identical state ERAs as a bootstrap to overturn state prohibitions on taxpayer funds being used for abortions. The state courts have never held that the state ERAs do not apply in these cases. While witnesses have disagreed as to whether the ERA would overturn these laws, a nonpartisan Library of Congress legal memorandum concluded the federal prohibition on taxpayer funds being used for abortion (the so-called Hyde Amendment) would probably fall in a challenge under the ERA if the standard of review for sex classification was the same as the current standard for race classification. When the ERA was considered in the full Judiciary Committee on Nov. 9, 1983, supporters stated that the standard of review for sex and race classifications would be the same. A classification amendment to the ERA making it abortion neutral was essential.

A second important issue that developed during the hearings concerned the effect the ERA would have on private and parochial schools. Testimony was heard from both supporters and those in opposition to the ERA that schools and seminaries operated by the Catholic Church, the Mormon Church, the Orthodox Jewish Synagogue, and other churches that distinguish in their treatment of men and women, would be in danger of losing their tax-exempt status. The public policy reasons which the U.S. Supreme Court used in the *Bob Jones* case, in which the IRS was permitted to revoke the tax-exempt status of a university, could easily be extended to sex discrimination by churches.

In committee, an amendment was offered to exempt private and parochial schools from the ERA. It was sharply debated but did not pass despite receiving strong bipartisan support. It is essential that an amendment be adopted to clearly spell out that the ERA will not cause our private and parochial school systems to be altered.

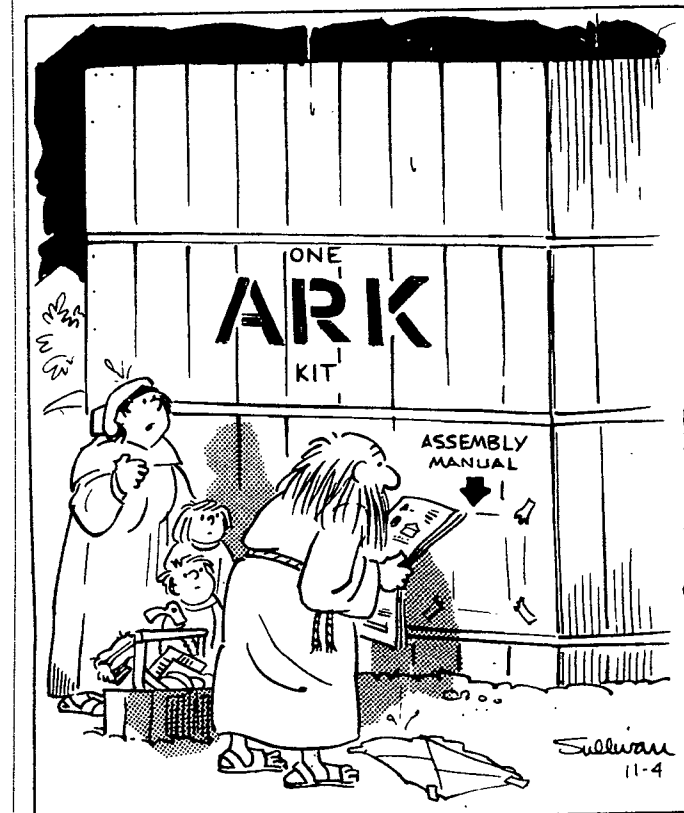
As legislators, our job is to find answers to questions, to offer amendments, and to make appropriate legislative history. I welcome the opportunity to do that if the ERA comes up again. Allowing Congress to work its will by allowing elected representatives of the people to offer and debate amendments will ensure such a record and will ultimately help passage of an Equal Rights Amendment by the states.

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fault with friends; but the knell of apathy came through loud and clear Sunday, Jan. 22, the 11th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision. The priests of the diocese

weren't told to say something about this holocaust we call abortion.

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"I DON'T SEE WHY HE COULDN'T HAVE GIVEN YOU ONE ALREADY ASSEMBLED."

Would She Approve?

EDITOR:

Re: Dorothy Day documentary. Do you suppose that for \$105,000 the Catholic Media Grant will succeed in making sufficiently clear how scandalizing such an expenditure would be to Miss Day and how contradictory it is to everything her way of life stands for?

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Editor's Note: Reader Connor refers to a grant of \$105,000 from the Catholic Communications Campaign to Emmaus House, New York, for a one-hour documentary on Dorothy Day.

Correction

In the letter by Marie Callahan Jesmer, "New Meaning For Eire," C-J March 7, the word "Democratic" was inadvertently left out and thus changed the context. Reader Jesmer wrote, "... the only pro-life candidate scheduled at this moment to appear on the ballot for New York State's Democratic voters ... is former Florida Gov. Reuben Askew." The omission makes it seem that no one on the Republican side is opposed to abortion when at least one, President Reagan is pro-life. Reader Jesmer wrote the letter before Gov. Askew withdrew his candidacy.

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.