

Editorial

The Times Put on Notice

Congratulations to the new archbishop of New York City.

In a television interview, March 11 Archbishop John J. O'Connor said he always compares "the killing of 4,000 babies a day in the United States, with the holocaust." He continued that Hitler "tried to solve a problem, the Jewish question. So kill them, shove them into ovens, burn them. Well, we claim that unborn babies are a problem, so kill them. To me, it really is precisely the same.

The New York Times has been building up a bit of a portfolio of insensitive handling of issues concerning the Catholic Church, witness its recent Page 1 positioning of the alleged Vatican mistreatment of Jewish refugees at the end of World War II based on hearsay. When the matter was cleared up, and the Vatican's role likewise, that story was placed somewhere deep in the pleats of the skirts of the "good gray lady."

Thus, it came as no great surprise when a Times editorial, given the archbishop's comments on abortion, implied that the archbishop said that Hitler had a "Jewish problem," that the archbishop meant

that women who have abortions practice Nazi genocide," and that "public figures who personally oppose abortion but resist imposing their theology on others are hypocrites and, indeed, sponsors of Hitlerian murder."

The Times editorialist snidely suggested that the head of the Catholic Church in New York City "change his tone."

First of all, the Times read an awful lot into the archbishop's remarks and the implication is clear. To his credit, Archbishop O'Connor did not sit still for this slanted treatment -- not for a day.

In a news story, he said he was "outraged" at the Times implications that he is anti-semitic and that his remarks were construed to mean that "in some way I was implying that the Jews were a problem."

"As I have publicly preached and written, I consider the holocaust one of the most outrageous events in the history of mankind." But it is beginning to seem that the Times is not interested in careful checking of the background of Catholics and Catholic institutions they are quick to demean in news stories and editorials.

The archbishop went on to explain, and it is a shame that such was ever necessary, that he "never, never for a moment" meant to compare women who have abortions with Nazis."

That, of course, is not his position, nor is it that of the Catholic Church.

As for public officials, he said he was not accusing

anyone of being a hypocrite but that he did not understand how anyone can say "I personally am opposed to abortion, but, after all, we must have a choice."

The Times, to its credit, followed the archbishop's remarks with another editorial.

"It is good to have Bishop John J. O'Connor's explanation greatly narrowing the sense in which he would compare abortion in America with the Nazis' slaughter of Jews...he expresses outrage that this page read his initial remarks as implying that Hitler had a 'Jewish' problem needing solution and that women choosing an abortion were guilty of a crime comparable to the Holocaust. This is a welcome clarification..."

Well, the archbishop was not "clarifying" anything. He was putting the New York Times straight and calling it to account for a misdirected slur. But, for now it may suffice, that the Times at least had the sense to answer quickly and to try to take off the curse by noting, "It is in that spirit (of respect) that we welcome Bishop O'Connor to New York, a gloriously contentious, tolerant and democratic community."

Does anyone else have the feeling that if the N. Y. Times persists in unfounded potshots at the church that the new archbishop may see to it that that wonderful community of which it intones will become indeed even more contentious and democratic.

and Opinions

President For Unborn

EDITOR:

Abortion being the cause celebre of the media and the left alike it took courage for President Reagan to uphold the right to life of the unborn as well as the prayer amendment in his State of the Union address. It is, of course, the Reagan administration which is attempting to prevent the starving to death in American hospitals of handicapped babies. Therefore, I was greatly disturbed to read the C-J's news item, Southern Tier Catholics Blast State of Union" where SSJ Mary Jean Smith unfairly tried to link deaths of babies (30 per minute) anywhere in the world to the American president while she selectively ignores the quantitatively greater (100 per minute) planned abortion killings which President Reagan is doing something about and did address.

If the sister's omission is simply oversight, one should merely question the competency of her comments but as certain activist nun groups such as Network, LCWR and NCAN have declared a permissive abortion policy, one wonders if sister's reticence in these deaths is reflective of this anti-life villainy.

So what if Sister has no room for President Reagan? The president has demonstrated a realistic appraisal of Marxist intentions (Grenada)

and has provided a reasonable defense while reversing the Carter-Mondale 17 percent inflation and 21 percent interest rates.

Louis J. Pasqua
133 Exchange St.
Geneva, N.Y. 14456

No Praise For Greeley

EDITOR:

I wish I could, but cannot, join the acclaim given Father Andrew Greeley in Father's Hohman's column, Feb. 22, for his contribution of a chair for Roman Catholic studies. I really wonder whether the good to come of it will offset the negative effects of his widely read salacious books which do nothing to promote the esteem of non-Catholics for the priesthood, nor do his ego trips on the Chicago-based television show which reaches thousands of people.

There is the old cynical saying, "The end justifies the means." If one subscribes to that, then we can overlook the tainted money used to establish the chair and also not think about the benefit of Father's lovely, substantial tax writeoff.

It seems to me that Father Andrew Greeley should have, not applause, but prayers that he may renew his covenant with God, refine his talents and serve the Lord in the way Jesus admonished his followers to do.

Mrs. Rhea Gartland
3829 27th Ave. N.
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33710

Why Exclude Abortion

EDITOR:

Last Saturday (March 10), I attended the "Election '84: Faith and Issues" program presented by Sister Nancy Sylvester of Network, a Catholic social justice lobby. The program was sponsored by the diocesan Department of Justice and Peace and the Diocesan Sisters Council.

Each participant received a packet of information. It was disheartening to see the abortion issue excluded from that literature. Even their brochure listing the positions of the candidates on various issues excluded abortion, yet listed the ERA. How can an organization that describes itself as a Catholic lobby and one that was originally begun by women religious ignore an issue that has taken the lives of over 15 million unborn children in the last 11 years?

I urge local members of Network to petition the national office and ask them to include the candidates' position on the abortion issue in their literature.

Ray Buonemani
38 Holcroft Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14612

Reasons For Celibacy

EDITOR:

Re: Father Gerald O'Connor's letter on celibacy (Feb. 19 C-J), I'm not taking up the cudgels against him. He's an old friend, a good priest and I admire him.

He may not like the policy of priestly celibacy, but he abides by it. It is also an admirable thing to provide a home for a young man who needs a place just now. However -- to dismiss the tradition of celibacy because "the Church needs cheap, socially safe, inoffensive help," is hardly fair.

Jesus chose to be a celibate. I'm not presuming to fathom divine wisdom as to exactly why he so chose. He certainly loved married people, clarified God's desire for the stability of the marriage bond, and even provided that there would be a special sacrament for the married.

Is it not possible that to carry out his work, he wanted

to be totally available to everyone, even giving up the great good of a wife and children of his own? And I presume that the eventual development of celibacy did stem from his example.

Certainly, celibacy is a Church discipline, not a matter of revealed truth. Yet, the Church has kept that discipline for centuries, despite much pressure to drop it, from within and without the fold. One day, for the total good of the Church, it may be changed. But for now, it is here, and the good must have outweighed the hardships, or it would have been dropped long ago.

While we do not have our own family by marriage, we priests should not lack for love. Over the years, many people have given me a lot of love and support. Our celibacy should convey: "we belong to all the people of the Church." I think most Catholics sense that, and offer us, in their own way, a lot of love and friendship.

Father Robert Kanka
St. James Church
17 Whig St.
Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886

Proper Names

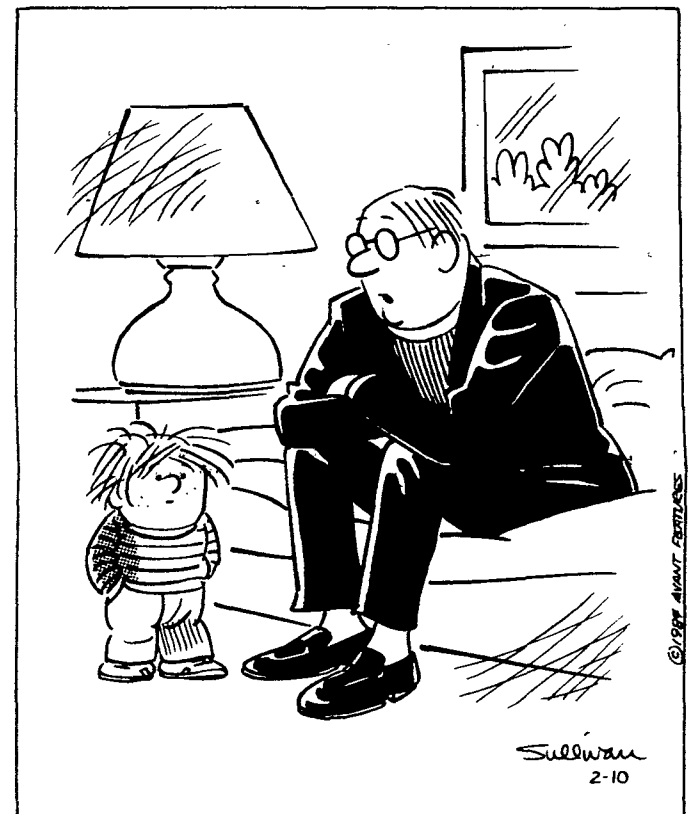
EDITOR:

Hooray for Marie Callahan-Jesmer! (C-J 3-7-84)

In Elmira, we still stand for, and put up with, free speech, like the Blarney Irish we may be. But we insist the Human Development staff stay with the MacMarquis of Queensbury Rules, such as if you were just imported (or is it deported?) a short while ago from Rochester, it is a little much to start a political movement as "Southern Tier Catholics." How about "Ex-Rochester natives" or "Long-time Rochester workers"?

Agnes O'Herron
205 Overland St.
Elmira, N.Y.

Editor's Note: It should be pointed out that it was a Courier-Journal headline writer who used (or misused) the term "Southern Tier Catholics" for the Chemung County Coalition for Equity in the Federal Budget which held its press conference at the Southern Tier Office of



"THE MAIN REASON WE TRY TO BE GOOD IS TO GET TO HEAVEN. YOUR MOM TELLS ME YOU'RE ONLY SHOOTING FOR DISNEYLAND."

Social Ministry, which also serves as the coalition's address.

Telethon Successful

EDITOR:

The 1984 "Weekend with the Stars" telethon for cerebral palsy is over, and, for the fifth year in a row, the telethon was a great success. More than 5,000 residents of the Greater Rochester Area contributed \$107,000 to the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Rochester.

Telethon funds are used to give handicapped children and adults new opportunities for mobility and independence. Two years ago, for instance, we purchased computerized communication equipment, allowing some of our speech-impaired clients to "talk" for the first time in their lives. Last year, we purchased video equipment, giving our clients the chance to see their own progress in physical and occupational therapy.

Telethon funds have helped make our new center at 2035 Monroe Ave. accessible to the handicapped. We were also able to establish a "transitional apartment" at Southview Towers in the

city, giving some of our clients a chance to live somewhat on their own for the first time.

The list could go on and on: More opportunities for handicapped children to attend summer camp. The chance for handicapped adult clients to participate in athletic programs. Equipment for DISCOVERY, our new child care program. Pre-vocational training materials for adults.

We've been able to accomplish much with the support of our numerous friends in the community. On behalf of the entire United Cerebral Palsy Association -- board members, staff, volunteers and clients -- please let me say "thank you" to the people of the Greater Rochester Area.

R. Judson Sloman
Telethon Chairperson
United Cerebral Palsy Association
Al Sigl Center
1000 Elmwood Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14620

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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.