

Editorial

Gannett Efforts: 1 Up, 1 Down

Kudos to one and a Bronx cheer to the other of the Rochester Gannett newspapers for their treatment of recent religious/moral developments.

First, and as it should be, the praise and strong it should be to the Times-Union and reporter Carol Eisenberg for a story headlined "After their abortions, deep regrets," in the April 2 issue. This is must reading for those opposed to abortion and even more required for those who have been urging it onto troubled mothers-to-be.

On the way to a story about a new anti-abortion lobby made up of women who have such operations, reporter Eisenberger sketched skillfully the "guilt, depression and mourning" these women feel. The organization is known as Women Exploited by Abortion and the local chapter has a beginning membership of 20. According to the Times-Union story, these women often "portray their own decision to have abortions as the result of pressures, misinformation and apathy from the men in their lives, particularly boyfriends, men and doctors." The story implies a strong, feminist leaning to the organization but from the opposite side of the coin as such organizations as Planned Parenthood and NOW. WEBA members "depict abortions as 'a denial of a woman's right . . . to give birth to the baby within her no matter what the circumstances might be.'"

Of course, a spokesman for Planned Parenthood, while manfully avoiding any concern for the tortured lives of these women, was quick to vent some

insensitive criticism at the group, referring to these women as "people of this ilk" and blaming them for fostering guilt among women who have had abortions.

However, the formation of such an organization is another sign of a slowdown in the societal rush to abortion as a remedy for troubled individuals. Thanks to the Times-Union for displaying this story prominently and tastefully. It is not often that this side of the abortion crisis is so carefully presented.

The criticism mentioned above goes to the weekend telegraph staff of the Democrat and Chronicle who at the top of Page 1 ran a story implying that Mother Teresa said she favored women priests. Anyone with even an inkling of Mother Teresa's view on this subject, and that should include wire editors of large daily newspapers, would know that something was amiss with this United Press International story. But there it was atop the Sunday paper Page 1, in a layout giving parallel treatment to a story headlined "DeLorean reborn after God 'zapped' him, wife says." In someone's judgment, these two stories are of equal weight and flavor.

The UPI story, to be completely fair, did report that Mother Teresa subsequently denied the report. Unfortunately this did not dissuade the local editor from a tryst with sensationalism on a matter of deep concern to many Democrat and Chronicle readers.

Happy Beginning

Not all the heavy reporting on the subject of abortion appears in the daily newspapers or even in weeklies. Oftimes, diamonds gleam elsewhere as evidenced by the story about "Michael Anthony" in the March

Rochester Area Right to Life Committee Newsletter. There, Editor Gerry Oftedahl skillfully and sensitively told the story of a woman who made the difficult decision to give birth when many, including her obstetrician, advised against it.

The woman was told by her ob/gyn that she had "invasive carcinoma," and he recommended either abortion and a hysterectomy or radiation treatment. "Shocked and confused but wanting her baby," she accepted a referral to an oncologist, a specialist on her condition. He confirmed the diagnosis and presented her case to the hospital's tumor board which recommended an abortion, as did her ob/gyn.

The woman told the oncologist of her wish to have the baby and he said that an abortion and hysterectomy offered a 90 percent chance of full cancer cure, a hysterectomy after birth about 75 percent. She decided to continue the pregnancy and the oncologist supported her choice.

Eventually, however, the ob/gyn's continued advice to have an abortion convinced her. She agreed.

Husband, son, friends and colleagues were disappointed but supportive. The night before the scheduled abortion, she felt the baby kicking vigorously. The next day as she and her husband prepared for the ride to the hospital she said, "I'm not going to kill my baby." According to the newsletter, "the day was filled with relief and celebration. When she called her co-workers, she heard a cheer."

A healthy Michael Anthony was born early in January. The hysterectomy was performed and extensive post-operative tests show no trace of cancer.

More Opinions

El Salvador Protestor

Editor:

Here at the Federal Prison in Sandstone, Minnesota, the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador has special significance.

Last summer 525 soldiers from El Salvador arrived at Fort Benning, Georgia to be armed and trained in military warfare. This meant more suffering for the poor of that country.

Father Larry Rosebaugh, an Oblate priest; Linda Ventimiglia, a physician's assistant; and myself, a Maryknoll priest, put on Army officer uniforms and entered Fort Benning one night. Armed with a high-powered tape recorder and the legendary last homily of Archbishop Oscar Romero, we climbed a tall pine tree near the barracks of the Salvadoran soldiers. In the silence of the night, the martyred Archbishop's voice rang out, "I want to make a special appeal to the men of the Army. You are killing your own brothers and sisters. Before an order to kill that a man may give, the law of God must prevail: Thou shalt not kill! In the name of God, in the name of the suffering people of El Salvador, I ask you, I beg you, I order you: Stop the repression!"

We were arrested and at our trial we tried to show that as Christians our faith called us to obey a higher law - the law of God which says, "Thou shalt not kill." My two companions were sentenced to 15 months and I got 18 months.

In the solitude of prison I think about the letter sent to our President by Archbishop Romero shortly before he was gunned down while saying Mass. He said, "Instead of leading to justice and peace in El Salvador, military aid from the United States only sharpens the injustice and repression of our people."

During this Holy Season of Lent our loving God asks each of us to hear the cry of the poor and those who have died for the poor. Is there not a better way to express our love for the poor of El Salvador than to stop U.S. military aid to that country.

Fr. Roy Bourgeois, MM
#10890-083

U.S. Federal Prison
Sandstone, Minnesota
55072

Why Shortage Of Vocations

EDITOR:

During an ad limina visit with U.S. bishops (Sept. 19, 1983), Pope John Paul II expressed to them at length his concern for religious life in America. He exhorted the bishops: "The fruitful living of religious charism presupposes the faithful acceptance of the Church's Magisterium . . . the episcopal college united with the pope."

Bishop John J. Ward, vicar for religious of the Los Angeles archdiocese, has not hesitated to give witness of his unity with the vicar of Christ. He affirmed that the Church teaching "Essential Elements for Religious" is "not debatable" -- (for the bishops, religious or laity). Father John Taggart, superior of the canons regular of the Immaculate Conception (Pasadena) said religious, too, lack faith in the words of the Lord and are led by pride to say to the Church and therefore to Christ, "I know better than you do."

An historical commentary on epidemics of such inordinate pride was recently given by the widely-known author, Msgr. Charles Hugo Doyle (Divine Love, Vol. 26, Nos. 3, 4, Issue 92). The post Vatican II epidemic of inordinate pride has the same visible (top of the iceberg) characteristics as those from the medieval ages (i.e. 755-1500 A.D.); priests and religious removed their body-guard of religious attire for worldly fashions, jewelry, beauty aids, partying, extended trips, disregard for

rule and constitution and cars (carriages) at essentially empty convents and monasteries. Is there any difference between, say, the Renaissance humanism and the deep currents of secular humanism of today?

Msgr. Doyle emphasized that when the Church (pope, bishops, synod or council) felt the obligation for reform, they always began by getting the priests and religious out of lay attire -- set them apart from the world.

Recently, many previously silent faithful priests and religious have been breaking their silence to give witness of their professed faith. Those afflicted with secular humanism but unable to see their professed faith are now able to see that the Church will meet its obligation as it has repeatedly since medieval ages.

This diocese has not been fruitful in the matter of priestly and religious vocations because, as Our Lord teaches, obedience is prerequisite for the holy spirit of truth. Priests, religious and parish councils cannot simply use lip service with the Lord of the harvest.

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

Investors Hypocritical?

EDITOR:

In your Feb. 15 edition, you published an article entitled "Kodak Among Companies Questioned by Church" (singular).

The tone and content of the article and remarks of the spokesman, Mr. Tim Smith, in a telecon to New York City (NC), left no room for doubt that while speaking as the director of the ICCR, he was actually speaking for the Roman Catholic Church. The impression is further enhanced by his disclosure of shares owned of some 22,000 odd, 96 percent of which are owned by Church orders. It is a sad, sad corollary on these followers of Christ blessed with such high finance in a world where two thirds of the children go to sleep hungry. Even spiritually more

pathetic is the unenviable plight of the Maryknoll Foreign Missions with 40,000 banking shares while one may painfully conclude that the poor Sisters of Loretto, with a mere 75 Martin Marietta shares, are not doing something right. In a rare vision that occurred to St. Brigid, the madonna, an ideal to which we all aspire, reportedly said, "Never in my life have I owned anything . . ." -- words lost on those claiming to be closest to God.

It is not the intent here to emphasize the sadness of all this, but to bring to the attention of Tim Smith that, while statements about the one-sided advertising of nuclear power and energy industries may be fashionable, especially among people suffering the affluence engendered by such corporate policies, they are also irresponsible and, paradoxically, approach hypocrisy. One should consult the rise in nuclear power in other countries where, thankfully, the vocal few do not have such an impact. Here (U.S.), under the guise of a fashionable crusade, such people are prepared to see this country impoverished while waving an American flag. The remark about one-sided advertising is ludicrous to inverse proportion for the nuclear power industry and the energy companies have remained largely inarticulate allowing the roaring bellows of the Naders and Fondas to go unanswered. Instead of burying our heads in a miasma of ignorance and pinning our hopes upon the Canadians with their hydropower to solve our energy problems, why not develop a firm energy policy of our own?

Now, apparently, the Church, orders thereof, join the groups of dissidents and civil disobedients using the affluence bestowed upon them by a contributing membership to make the task of U.S. industry competing for world markets even more tenuous.

J. E. Calpin
RD 1
Erin, N.Y.



"HEY LISTEN, I'M NOT OFFENDED. EVERYONE USES LANGUAGE LIKE THAT AT INCOME TAX TIME."

Is U.S. Church Neglectful?

EDITOR:

A few days after reading the reply of one of your columnists to a reader's question on the seriousness of certain sexual sins, we came across the enclosed editorial from the most widely circulated newspaper in the United States, The Wall Street Journal. It seemed to us to focus quite well on a major problem or failing of our churches today, both Catholic and Protestant.

While pope after pope after pope has spoken clearly on these moral issues which people are concerned about, especially parents and young people, our own culture in America seems to continue to drift without much leadership toward a moral vacuum. Parents often feel alone and abandoned by the church on these issues while its leaders concern themselves with social, political and economic problems often in far away places. It is almost as if social and political problems have become the chief focus of attention for the Church while moral and spiritual

leadership is ignored by those to whom the people look for guidance and support.

We would like to see the Church and its leaders resume their proper role in the lives of the people who look to them for clear direction rather than psychological "mush" as the editorial puts it.

Richard and Mary Beth
O'Hara
264 Carling Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14610

Editor's Note: The editorial in reference appeared in the Feb. 20 Wall Street Journal. The O'Hara letter reflects very well the editorial which concludes: "Whether the outcome of today's vote (on school prayer), the battle between fundamentalists and secularists over contemporary morality will stay messy so long as Catholic and Protestant church leaders chase secular political goals while neglecting the needs of their congregations for moral and spiritual nourishment."

Correction

In his letter appearing April 4, Robert S. Lombino wrote, "There is only one Mediator between God and man." The word "one" was inadvertently omitted.