

Editorial

Time to Raise Drinking Age

The New York State Catholic Conference supported raising the state's drinking age from 18 to 19 and plans to support a further upward change to 21, now that it has become a legislative matter.

The conference is not alone in its thinking. The American Automobile Association has reported that "nearly nine out of ten AAA members in New York State favor raising the state's legal drinking age from 19 to 21."

The AAA editorialized in its newspaper, The Traveler: "Many of our young aren't growing older. Each year, roughly 35 percent of the 25,000 Americans who die from alcohol-related traffic accidents are between 16 and 24. The Surgeon General has reported that life expectancy in this country has increased for every age group, except the group composed of those who are 15 to 24 years old."

"AAA has long combatted the problem of drinking and driving. For nearly 20 years, AAA has developed and promoted alcohol-education and rehabilitation programs. Yet, education alone is not enough. One of the legislative measures AAA believes could help to fight the problem is a uniform drinking age of 21 -- for all alcoholic beverages."

It makes sense and not just for the obvious reasons related to statistics. Just pragmatically speaking, many areas, particularly in this region, have gotten "tough" on drinking drivers of any age. Stiff fines, possible incarceration and public embarrassment are becoming more prevalent. And it is important to remember that although teens seem particularly vulnerable, probably because of their inexperience in both drinking and driving, they are not alone as perpetrators of this problem. But it is vitally important not only to keep them alive and free of devastating experiences but also not to be training more future drinking drivers. The law itself and the reasons for its necessity would be educative in this respect.

The facts and figures will be aired as the legislative debate proceeds. One such is that studies have shown that raising the legal drinking age has been an effective deterrent to alcohol-related traffic accidents.

Statistics from the State Automobile Association newsletter: "Nineteen and 20-year-olds' involvement in alcohol-related crashes is disproportionate to their numbers" . . . "Persons under 21 account for more than 20 percent of alcohol-related fatalities" . . . "Younger drivers are far more likely than experienced drivers to take risks" . . . "A state can expect about a 28 percent reduction in nighttime fatal crash involvement among drivers the raised drinking age applies to."

In a letter to the editor elsewhere on this page, Gov. Mario Cuomo cites like statistics but probably makes his most telling point when he expresses himself from a father's viewpoint -- "I know what it is to worry about a son's or daughter's safety."

For many parents, this worry has become a nightmare.

and Opinions

Peace, Not Pacifism

EDITOR:

Pacifism has never been approved by the Church. Pope Paul expressed the futility of seeking peace without justice when he set aside Jan. 1, 1967 as "World Day of Peace." Each succeeding Jan. 1 has brought reaffirmation of the traditional teaching of the Church on the moral obligation of self defense.

"Peace is not pacifism" stated the Holy Father. The world must defend itself, he pointed out, "against the snares of pacifism intended to smother in men's minds the meaning of justice, of duty and of sacrifice. We must arouse in men of our times...the sense of peace

founded upon truth, justice, freedom and love."

Pope John Paul II, in his peace message, Jan 1, 1982, stated: "Christians, even as they strive to resist and prevent every form of warfare, have no hesitation in recalling that in the name of an elementary requirement of justice, people have a right and even a duty to protect their existence and freedom by a proportionate means against an unjust aggressor."

"Turn the other cheek" seems to be the solution of those who are either uninformed or misinformed. This is the easy way. It takes a little time to search for truth of the militant atheistic forces which are our only adversaries. It does not take much time or effort to discover the tactics, strategy and objectives of Communism and how turning the other

cheek would please them very much indeed.

Turning the other cheek is an admirable practice in personal relationships. Applying this solution to an aggressor-nation confrontation is a maudlin cop-out. If a pacifist-extremist wishes to practice this matter of personal conscience, let him stand in front of an aggressor, drop his arms and commit death with dignity. He has no right to jeopardize my life or freedom, nor the security of this country.

The Gospel's formula for peace should be considered: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." (Luke 11:21)

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(here) do not want women as priests! Nor does the Pope want women as priests!

Flora Novak
3290 Noble Road
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Editor's Note: Either the news report in question is false or reader Novak's editing changed its context. Assumedly, the report involves the final report of the diocesan task force on Bishop Matthew H. Clark's pastoral letter, "The Fire in the Thornbush." Neither in this final report or at any time ever did the task force call for "ordination of women to the priesthood." We refer all to the Courier-Journal story on this report, Jan. 25, 1984. To quote from the task force report: "More caution was evident concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood. Some groups wanted women ordained but suggested that the faithful be sufficiently prepared. Others asserted that women must not back off from this issue even though it does stir up controversy. Another group said, 'Women should be doing something constructive with their time insted of making waves about the priesthood.' Another said we must only do as the Church rules allow." The task force reported frequently on its deliberations. Indeed it published a column which ran every other week throughout 1983 in this newspaper.

St. Bridget's Faith Healing

EDITOR:

My family and I just returned from a faith building experience. We celebrated Mass at St. Bridget's Church with Father Bob Werth and the parish community. The energy and enthusiasm generated from all was inspiring and uplifting.

I needed to see that faith is from within; the Kingdom of God is formed from within and community is built on faith. I needed to be at St. Bridget's today and I invite others to join Father Werth and his faith-building community at St. Bridget's at 10 a.m. any Sunday.

Thanks, Father Werth; thanks, St. Bridget's community, and mostly, thanks be to God!

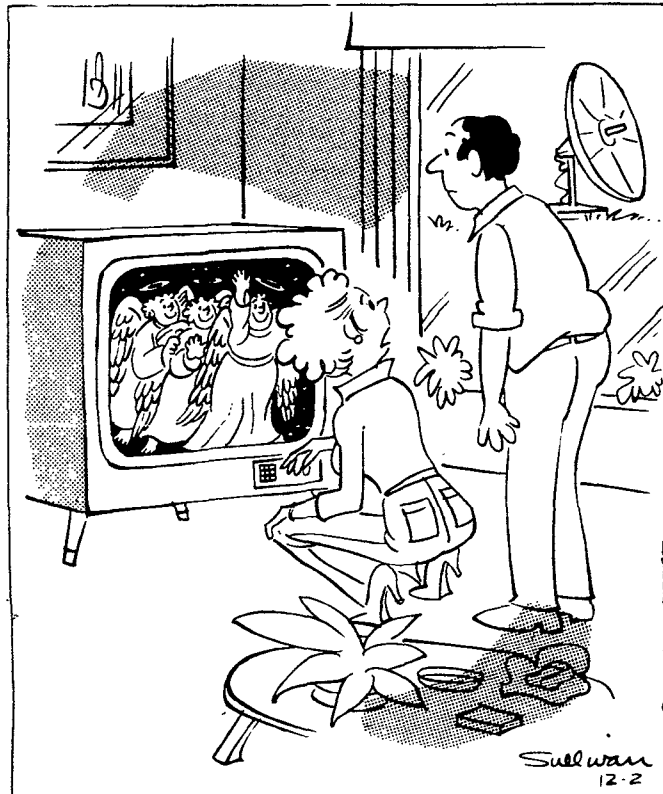
JoAnne Mooney
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Ordination Not Urged

EDITOR:

During our Easter visit with my in-laws in the Albany area, they handed me an Albany paper news clipping dated Jan. 19, 1984, which said, "Catholics and Bible Changes" . . . "A task force representing 375,000 members of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester . . . suggest elimination of sexist language in Bible...also diocese should allow...ordination of women to priesthood."

(Bulk of news clipping was eliminated to allow for brevity.)
Who makes up this "task force"? Me and my relatives



"THEY'RE ON ALL THE CHANNELS! I TOLD YOU OUR SATELLITE DISH ISN'T WORKING RIGHT."

reduced by an estimated 30 percent.

Beyond the lives saved, and injuries avoided, a 21-year-old purchase age should result in an estimated savings of as much as \$60 million to \$70 million in medical care, rehabilitation, emergency services, lost income and property damage. These costs are otherwise borne by all New Yorkers in the form of insurance premiums and taxes.

I must confess that even more convincing than the statistics is the fact that we are dealing with lives and serious injuries. As a father, I know what it is to worry about a son's or daughter's

safety. And as a driver, I share the fear that, through no fault of my own, I (or perhaps my wife or parents) could someday be injured or killed in an accident in which the other driver was drunk. Over the next several weeks, we will be making our case to the Legislature, urging them to pass legislation this session so that we can start sharing with them, and with you and the public, the statistics and data. But we will also be emphasizing that, in the final analysis, 21 is a lifesaver.

Mario M. Cuomo
Governor
State of New York
Albany, N.Y. 12224

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.

WHO you WHAT
as a brother, sister, priest
serving the Rochester Diocese
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Vocation Sunday Is May 13

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