

Editorials

Busy Bigots

Some hatemongers in this country are waging new wars of bigotry against Catholics. Perhaps "wars" is the wrong word -- these people might as well be trying to paint St. Peter's Basilica with a toothpick. Some ironically have provided their own punishment by desecrating their names with public admissions of responsibility, such as the Alamo Foundation. But the unhappier fact is that the hate they fling about often finds fertile ground -- in private, many like to read or listen to or even believe such drivel.

The Courier-Journal has asked anyone coming across such hate material to let us know. Readers have sent in some of the more notable examples -- it is kind of like in "Casablanca" when the police inspector says, "Round up the usual suspects." In

comes Chick Publications' particular brand of mental illness. This material, in comic book format, is so patently hateful that only those mentally unbalanced or already bitterly prejudiced toward Catholics pay them any attention -- although a local "Christian" bookstore once refused requests to remove the comics from its shelves and a "Christian" church also promoted them.

Then there is another kind of religious prejudice long extant, often disseminated from individual churches. This kind of drivel is the effort of places which ordinarily couldn't attract flies with honey on a hot day. If they concentrated on delivering the Good News of the Resurrection they wouldn't have to resort to attempts to try to chop more popular and accepted religions down to their size. Good people, be they Christian, Jew, Muslim or atheist, know how to disagree without resort to invective and/or appeals

to bigotry.

The aforementioned examples of bigotry have been circulated in this area for many years; examples of them sent to the Courier are kept in its editorial "hoptoad and adder" file. But these days, readers also should be alert to the newest brand of lies being promulgated in a campaign which seems to be going national, such as that the Vatican owns most of the major print and electronic media in the United States. Admittedly, these are, at least, more amusing than the other absurdities being circulated. At the same time, however, it must never be forgotten that people once regarded Adolf Hitler as a buffoon.

If there are any lessons in all of this, perhaps it is becoming clear that such hate is grotesque among decent people and that kindness grveling in the dirt who seem to have lost sight of God's intent.

and Opinion

Fetal Pain A Reality

EDITOR:

After weeks of reflection on what transpired at our Rochester Area Right-to-Life Booth at the CIGN-Hill Festival, I feel compelled to write about some important and basic observations.

One of the most frequent questions and remarks we heard was concerning when abortions may be performed. As the law now states, abortions can be done anytime before the birth of the child, that is, throughout the nine months of pregnancy. Annually over 80,000 children are aborted by saline abortions, prostaglandin abortions, and hysterotomies and these are all done on second (three to six months) and third (six to nine months) trimester pregnancies. There are 12,000 legally viable babies aborted each year. (This latter figure is taken from "Family Planning Perspective," Alan Guttmacher Institute, Vol. 3, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1981.) For clarification sake, a legally viable baby is one that thanks to modern technology can survive outside the mother's womb.

Another area of questioning had to do with intrauterine growth and development. As would be expected, the "hot" topic of fetal pain came up again. And obviously it's one we should look at closely. Let me paraphrase from a recently published medical text:

"The requisite pain structures of the central

nervous system exist in a human fetus perhaps as early as eight weeks, but certainly by 13 and a half weeks. Sensory nerves may reach the skin of the fetus by the ninth week of gestation. The first detectable brain activity in response to noxious stimuli occurs in the thalamus between the eighth and tenth week." -- Reinis, S., Goldman, JM: The Development of the Brain. Springfield. Charles C. Thomas, 1980, pp. 223-235.

Even without neurologists and fetologists telling us that fetal pain is a reality, our simple common sense should dictate that since five to six months prior and newborns feel pain, the preception of pain had to develop sometime between conception and the fifth month.

To demonstrate fetal responsiveness, Dr. Bernard Nathanson (presently assistant professor, Clinical Ob-Gyn at Cornell University Medical Center and former co-founder of NARLA) has filmed an actual abortion of a 10-week intrauterine child using ultrasound. The film shows the terror, the fight for life of that "fetus." With his/her mouth open in a silent scream of terror, the child swims vigorously to the topmost part of the uterus when the suction tube is inserted. It would be hard to deny that this 10-week old child was without feeling!

Lastly, most passers-by at Corn Hill were simply amazed at the physically accurate, life-sized fetal models that we had on display there. With their help the "fetus" could be seen as the rapidly

growing and maturing child that he/she is. Youngsters especially were drawn to these models and would pull mom and dad over to "see the babies."

Our hope and the focus of our educational efforts are that we all some day, like those children, "see the babies" -- and in seeing them come to realize their worth.

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The Olympics And St. Paul

EDITOR:

With the Olympics in progress, it may serve us all a spiritual value to recall St. Paul's "connection" with these ancient traditional games.

St. Paul of Tarsus went to the Greeks' Stadion centuries ago, watched the races with interest, admired them, and the athletes' discipline in training. All the while he saw another contest, a race, to win a golden crown (no silver or bronze here).

"In a race all the runners take part but only one of them wins the prize. Run, then, in such a way as to win the prize. Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline; he does so in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but Christians do it for one that will last forever. That is why I run straight for the finish line; that is why I am like a boxer who does not waste his punches. I harden my body and bring it under complete control, to keep from being rejected myself after having called others to the contest." (1 Cor. 9:24.)

Missionary Paul found his mission accomplished in the end. "I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, I have kept the faith. And now the prize of victory is waiting for me, the crown which the Lord will give me." (2 Tim. 4:7)

Winners? All who finish the race! Race times will vary: different obstacles, roughs, chuck holes, crosswinds, trials, pains, temptations, discouragement, for each one (but none impossible, says the Lord). And split-second timing? Well, be patient! God is our good Father and He knows each child's handicaps, and He waits, and He waits, and encourages and gives help, and waits some more...

So, in godly hope, persevere through every Olympics (at Los Angeles, originally Our Lady of the Angels) and on every trip around the sun until ESCHATON BLESSEDNESS -- FOREVER AND EVER!

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Editorial Unfair

EDITOR:

As a committed pro-life advocate, I agree wholeheartedly with your abortion facilities (editorial, July 18).

However, I feel you left a very thin veil between the many law-abiding pro-life groups and their millions of supporters and the handful of bombers.

Rochester Area Right to Life has a constitution that states our purpose as non-violent and our membership has never considered any other course. RARTL does not demonstrate or picket. Some of our members, on their own, may join with others to picket, pray and persuade -- always with the intent to save lives, not to destroy.

I think it is unfair and even disloyal to the cause we both support. We have come to expect such bias from the secular media but expect more rational treatment from the C-J. I wonder, if a distillery were attacked; would the action be arbitrarily linked to MADD.

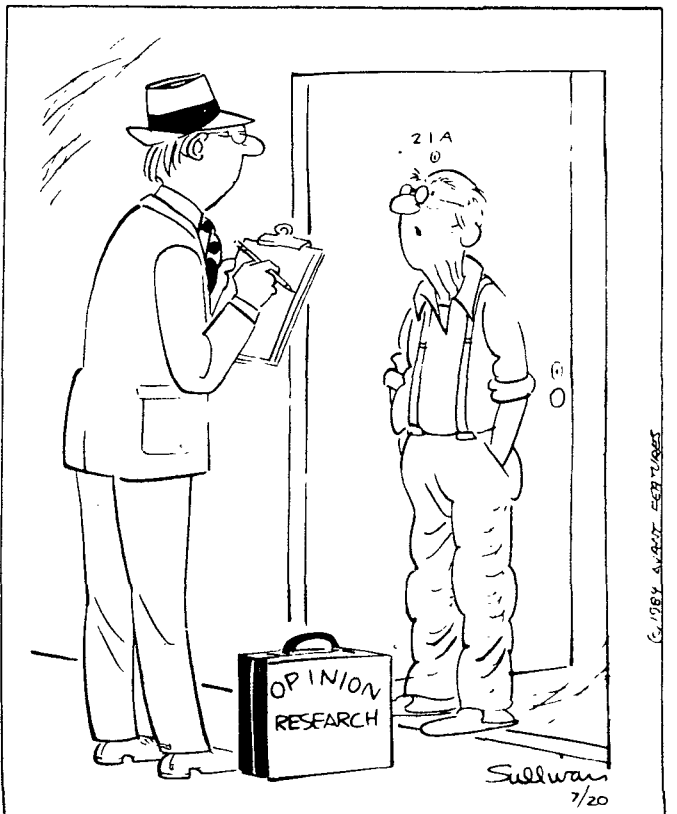
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Inside Info On Nicaragua

EDITOR:

July 25, Feast of Apostle St. James.

Being pushed to the wall can precipitate irrational behavior. That's the way a number of us clergy working in Nicaragua see the expulsion of ten of our confreres on July 9-10 by the Sandinista administration. Indeed, at a meeting of male religious superiors on July 13 in Managua, that was one of the observations. Three events in recent weeks 1. the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference's Easter pastoral letter 2. the June sermon of Bishop Vega, president of the Episcopal Conference at El Sauce Shrine, and 3. the July 9 demonstration in favor of



"I GO WITH GOD. EVERYONE ELSE CAN TAKE A FLYING LEAP."

Father Amano Pena, with its extraordinarily wide previous publicity on an international level -- all were provocative at a time when the revolutionary leadership has to carry on a hot war against the Reagan administration (I've buried three soldiers from my parish killed by Reagan bullets in the past eight weeks) and shoulder the critical economic situation facing all Central and Latin America. (We have some 100 children who will make their First Communion in December barefoot for lack of where-withal.)

Were the 10 foreign priests guilty of subversive activity? The government offered no confining proof. Better to see them as grumblers who were also staunch supporters of Archbishop Miguel Obando Bravo who led the July 9 march. Every one of the 10 was working in Obando archdiocese asnd could be expected to stand behind their ordinary, although only four of them actually participated in the July 9 march which had a total of 23 priests of the more than 200 working in Nicaragua. Some who marched were not expelled.

Father Pena, a Nicaraguan, was accused in June by Sandinista security of open subversive activity. Rather convincing videotaped condemnatory evidence was offered to the public over TV. The archbishop denied the accusations without examining the evidence which he claimed could easily have been fabricated. It's almost certain Father Pena was caught by an ABCAM-type operation.

Your older readers who lived through curtailment of civil liberties during World

War II can appreciate the war measures the Sandinistas have been taking to protect the achievements of the revolution. But even emergency measures can be irrational. The expulsions were irrational because they can be interpreted as proof of the persecution of the Church, and the American public, whose only source of information is the mass media (Lords deliver us from the partisan UPI) might erroneously conclude that President Reagan needs another four years to bury the Sandinistas and "save" Catholicism in Central America. The kind of Catholicism that would be saved by President Reagan is not the kind history would judge kindly, as it doesn't judge kindly churchmen loyal to Spanish colonial rule in the early 19th Century (e.g. Bishop Nicolas Garcia Jerez) or Managua's Archbishop Rodriguez, with his close ties to the Somoza dictatorship in the 1960s.

I've asked the people of our parish, both from the pulpit and in our bulletin (enclosed) to allow the 10 priests to return. I've personally written Comandante Tomas Burge, reminding him 1. that his Somocista predecessor, Minister of the Interior Antonio Mora, expelled me from Nicaragua in 1978, with the ensuing inconvenience to me and my parish, and 2. the spiritual well-being of believers is an important value to protest. Stay tuned to this station for the latest incredible developments from the heart of Central America.

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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 divers, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.