

Editorial

Random Thoughts On Politics

● If the position of some Catholic elected officials were valid, then members of that particular faith serve at a disadvantage. They are unable to impose their religious beliefs on the populace they represent.

● Abortion is not wrong because the Catholic Church says it is; it is wrong because it is a crime against humanity. The Catholic Church merely stands among many faiths and institutions and people of all stripes who recognize the evil of killing unborn children.

● The judgment of Catholic politicians in openly disagreeing with their Church is open to argument. But there is no denying that they have left a false impression that the members of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church are haughtily alone in opposition to abortion and that that is the only issue concerning them.

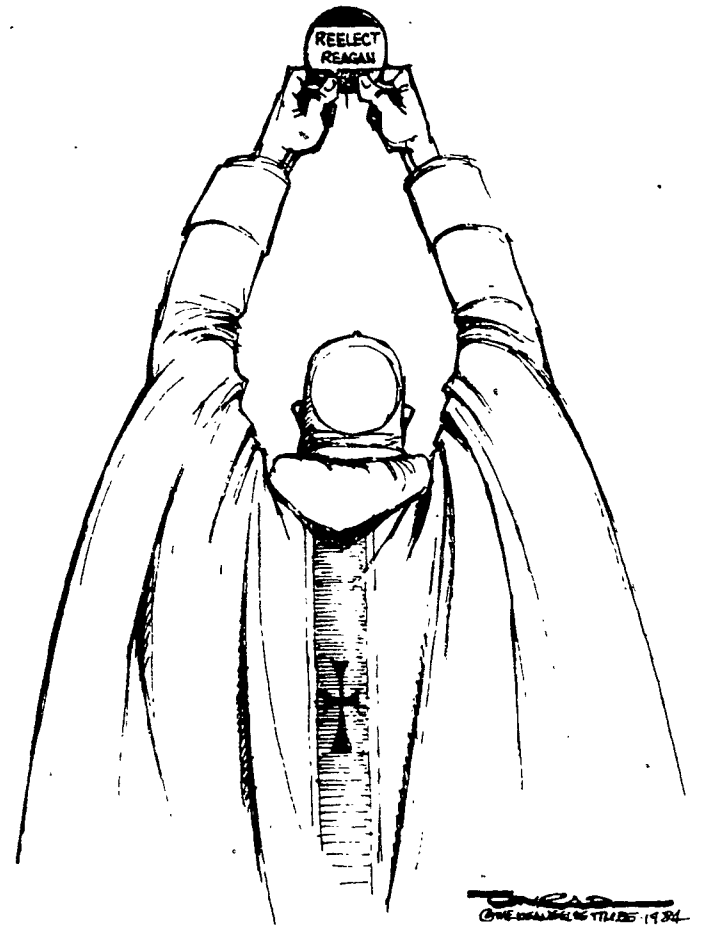
And on the second point, the Courier-Journal last week concluded a four-part series detailing the many concerns of the U.S. Catholic Conference. Definitely, abortion was there. But so were many other

concerns, particularly those outlining the responsibility of government to help the poor.

● From a historical perspective, the ink is still warm on the U.S. bishops' widely discussed and controversial position on the challenge of peace and yet some people seem to ignore that fact. It is often heard that our bishops are concerned only with abortion. Of course, this is not true. In this diocese particularly, under the leadership of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, many programs are in full tilt emanating from the pastoral which is far from dead. It is difficult to deny that some people are deliberately using the abortion stance of the U.S. bishops as a way of discrediting the Church as trying to break the Church-State barrier or by appealing to anti-Catholic prejudice to make abortion more acceptable.

● Perhaps the elected and aspiring officials who are personally opposed to abortion but cannot impose their views on others should ponder a hypothetical situation. Imagine that the Catholic Church does not exist. Forget it! Then how would these politicians in conscience handle abortion on demand?

● The public disagreement with the U.S. bishops by elected Catholic officials may be done without rancor but it provides ammunition for others who have little understanding of the Church. The cartoon accompanying this editorial is an example of such extension. Obviously the cartoonist does not know, or chooses to ignore, the fact that the U.S. Catholic Conference is in disagreement with the president on a wide range of issues, from governmental responsibility to help the poor to nuclear disarmament to Latin American policy.



The Los Angeles Times cartoon by Pulitzer Prize editorial cartoonist Paul Conrad depicting a bishop elevating a Reagan button "lampoons the Eucharist," according to an editorial in The Tidings, the archdiocesan newspaper. (NC Photo)

and Opinions

Mt. Carmel Remembered

EDITOR:

I really enjoyed your article on Our Lady of Mt. Carmel anniversary.

We lived at 44 1/2 Ontario St. from 1907 to 1916. We were all German and Irish families and saw the church built. We attended it now and then as we moved to Our Lady of Victory Church with

Father Notebaert, who also married us.

My grandmother lived with us. She was in her early 70s. She used to climb the two flights of stairs each morning to go to Mass.

Father Walter Foery, later bishop of Syracuse, was pastor there for a short time. Brings back happy memories.

Mrs. Leo Krenzer 2243 Lake Road Spur Seneca Falls, N.Y. 13148

Won't Be Misled

EDITOR:

It probably was inevitable that the vitriol against President Reagan and the advocacy of the abortion holocaust by Catholics Mario Cuomo and Geraldine Ferraro would be followed by the letter of Sister Christina Welch with more vitriol against the president coupled with advocacy of the women's encampment (C-J 9-19).

Sister Christina's claim that these women will "weave a web of support for life" is probable deception. Bishop Matthew H. Clark was booed for his anti-abortion statement before these radicals. And who did they choose as their spokespersons at the same rally but the strident pro-abortion advocates Bella Abzug and Dr. Spock. The people of God were not misled by Sister Mansour nor will be misled (pardon the pun) by sisters sour on Reagan.

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

Shawcross Defended

EDITOR:

In response to my letter of Aug. 15, Robert Bart (Sept. 12) judges me "in error on several points" regarding the genocide in Cambodia in the mid-1970s.

In attempting historical revisionism, Robert Bart presents one meager source, a book review from Western Imperial's "The Economist" of London and Bart offers one piece of classical McCarthy-like innuendo -- that William Shawcross, veteran Indochina correspondent for the Sunday Times and visiting research fellow at Meriton College, Oxford, needed to be "left-leaning" in order to come to his widely-shared conclusion that the U.S. bore most responsibility for the Cambodian tragedy.

Robert Bart chooses to ignore the 34 pages of scrupulous footnotes which fortify the evidence put

forward by Mr. Shawcross in "Sideshow." Documentation provided by declassified material, the Pentagon papers, taped interviews from across the world with high officials and reputable eyewitnesses, the memoirs of prime characters and others well-known chroniclers of the Southeast Asian genocide ought not be dismissed casually in analyzing culpability for one of the "greatest crimes in the history of humankind -- misplaced patriotism notwithstanding.

But rather than impose a judgment of error on Robert Bart or continue to bandy rhetorical tennis balls with him, I invite readers to form their own opinion by investigating "Sideshow" and other impeccably substantiated masterworks (Stanley Karnow's made for PBS "Vietnam" and Joseph A. Amter's "Vietnam Verdict" are two of the best) about the U.S. invasion that resulted in nearly 6 million dead -- including 360,000 Indonesians' systematic genocide of East Timor during 1974-768, one part of that regional horror that Robert Bart has always disregarded.

Contrary to his protestations and my observations, Robert Bart has yet to publicly condemn examples of U.S. atrocities in combat or those committed by our proxies -- at least during the five years that I've read and responded to Bart's numerous letters to editors in this part of New York. It undermines the strength of our nation to remain silent toward the bombing of civilian targets in North Vietnam, the Mylai massacre, the epochal defoliation and carcinomatosis of Vietnam, or the present dirty war of aggression against Nicaragua.

Yes, we were generous when the Marshall Plan rehabilitated friend and foe alike after the last world war. Is it poor loser's syndrome that has not extended similar aid to war-ravaged Vietnam -- after renegeing on the promise of \$4.2 billion in reparations as assured by Richard Nixon to Vietnam in February 1973?

The unjust war of the U.S. in Southeast Asia made it

easier for the Soviets to justify their invasion of Afghanistan. But Afghanistan only follows a distinguishable pattern of younger sibling-like imitation; there is not an area of human rights abuse that the U.S. did not precede (and often exceed) the U.S.S.R.

Healing for this condition will not come about by philosophically rooted hypocrisy but through honest acknowledgement and rejection of our part in human rights abuses, especially the Southeast Asia genocide.

John E. Milich PO Box 333 Ithaca, N.Y. 14851

Our Job As Stewards

EDITOR:

"O Lord, my God! When I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds Thy hands have made. I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed. When through the woods and forest glads I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees; When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; then sings my soul, my savior God to Thee, how great thou art."

The above words by Stuart K. Hine remind us of the majestic beauty of creation. It should also remind us of our duty as stewards of the earth and that we should pass it on to the next generation in at least as good condition as we got it. This means leaving highly toxic chemicals out of our daily lives including unnecessary weed killers or herbicides.

What we call weeds are merely plants which we'd rather not have. If they are really in the way they can be cut down or crowded out or pulled manually. There are lots of alternatives to poisoning the environment.

I feel especially sorry for the young men employed by companies like "lawn doctors." They often don't even wear masks when they spray those awful chemicals and frequently get their skin soaked with them besides

inhaling the mist into their lungs. The fact that they are so young tells me that they don't know the danger to themselves. Just taking a shower doesn't stop the chemical damage caused by absorbing them through the pores of their skin. No one can predict how unhealthy that victim can be five or 10 years from now.

Mary Rita Crowe 2052 E. Main St. Rochester, N.Y. 14609

Panelists, Bishop Lauded

EDITOR:

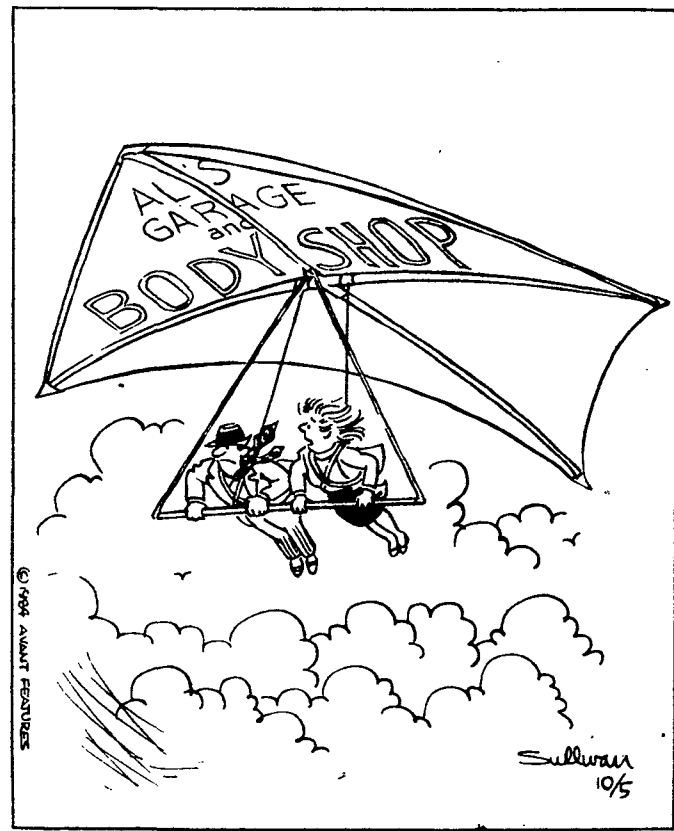
On Friday, Sept. 21, I attended the annual Conference Day for teachers in our Catholic schools. The theme was Peacemaking. The morning activity began with a beautiful celebration of the Eucharist with our bishop, followed by his talk entitled "The Challenge of Peace -- A Challenge to Schools." All were inspired by his words on Christian peacemaking. A panel of four speakers developed the theme in the noon session.

I was profoundly moved by the sensitive presentation of all four panelists. I want them to know that their words were heard and that their message is a powerful influence for peace.

To Sister Patricia Scholles SSJ, Joseph Halloren, Mary Rose McCarthy and Sheila Kinski, I say: preach that message in season and out of season. Yours is a dream that peace is possible; and that we should begin that teaching at a very early age. You really believe you can make a difference. I believe you can, too.

The diocese of Rochester is blessed to have such inspired leadership.

Father Edward A. Zimmer Pastor St. Mary's Church 15 Clark St. Auburn, N.Y. 13021



"WHAT WERE YOUR EXACT WORDS WHEN YOU PRAYED THE GARAGE WOULD GIVE US A DECENT 'LOANER'?"

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.

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