

Editorial

The Garment Must Be Seamless

The seamless garment. Ever since Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago coined this apt phrase it has been used to describe the collective position of the Catholic bishops of the United States.

The garment, respect for the sanctity of all life, is seamless because it is inconsistent to work for protection against nuclear holocaust and at the same time to espouse the death penalty. Some may feel this is an illogical position because "innocent" lives would be erased in a nuclear attack while "guilty" lives are destroyed in capital punishment. The trouble is that the modifiers are subjective. In the eyes of those dropping a nuclear bomb the lives taken are not innocent, they are judged to be the enemy, much as the lives taken through capital punishment are also seen as those of the enemy. If we do not

strive to respect all life, we will end up respecting none.

Even though the struggle to restore the right to life for all unborn children is the most crucial of all the "life" struggles at this time, it is nevertheless inconsistent to join in this endeavor and not to work for equal opportunity and justice for the oppressed already among us. At the risk of being too fantastic, suppose for a moment that a visitor from another galaxy were to come upon us. Imagine how astounded such a person would be at learning that we conceive and then kill our own offspring. To carry the scenario a bit further, how would it look if we through government were to ensure the birth of all unborn children then ignore them thereafter -- to leave them up for the grabs of an uncaring, self-serving society. Perhaps to make them wish they were never born.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark, in his sensitive yet firm letter to the two presidential candidates, drew a perfect picture of the seamless garment. He outlined four general areas of concern to all involved in public life -- respect for the dignity of every person, a conviction of the brotherhood and sisterhood of

individuals and families across the earth, an essential respect for the vulnerable and defenseless, the necessity for adequate food, shelter, health care and employment for all. He then further specified these cares into abortion, the arms race and poverty.

The bishop's letter, however, was more than a recitation of just concerns. It also embodied respect for the candidates and their views even when possibly divergent from the bishop's own. The letter displayed no vitriol, no partisanship; it merely outlined the bishop's position on the most important areas of concern and called for fresh consideration on the parts of the candidates. While maintaining his own objectivity, the bishop suggested the candidates do likewise on the life and death issues.

While the letter was directed to the two presidential candidates, it also serves as an example of the approach all should take vis a vis our in-office and potential public servants regarding the life issues. Respectful, clear and cognitive of the potential goodness of the men and women who seek to serve us all as our governmental leaders.

and Opinion

Rally Got Short Shrift

EDITOR:

On Page 1 of the Oct. 3 Courier-Journal appears a picture taken at the Rosary rally, with Bishop Constantino Luna celebrating. Oddly, he is unidentified. Considering that he is a bishop of the Catholic Church and, moreover, an emissary of our Holy Father sent to lead services all over the country to ask for prayers for peace, it is hard to understand why he was given no notice beyond the picture. The photograph is small and so he cannot be distinguished as an individual.

Bishop Luna's coming here was part of the program of 100 days of prayer asked for by our Holy Father to obtain the blessings of peace. The bishops of the United States have issued a pastoral indicating their great interest in the subject. Since the visit of Bishop Luna coincided with the diocesan conference, "Facing the Challenge of Peace ... Themes of Hope," the Rosary rally could readily be seen as fortifying and promoting the same end and should have received wide notice and support.

People who were at the War Memorial estimated the attendance at between 2,000 and 2,500 rather than the 1,000 noted in the caption under the picture. The attendance was in any event much smaller than it should have been for so important an occasion. There are, of course, many possible explanations for the small turnout for so splendid and meaningful a service but looming importantly in my view is the amazing lack of media attention before the event.

What would seem to make such inattention deliberate is the very inadequate reporting following the rally.

If we really want peace, then all important efforts to further it should be given adequate support. And since peace is a gift from God, a rally intended to seek His help is not something to ignore but rather something to be zealously and prayerfully promoted.

Father Salem Faddoul
St. Nicholas Church
Melkite Greek Catholic Rite
20 Leo St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14621

Editor's Note: Father Faddoul implies that the Courier-Journal deliberately did not publicize the rally when in fact the paper ran lengthy advance stories on it in the Aug. 15, Aug. 29 and Sept. 19 issues, including all the information on Bishop Luna mentioned in Father Faddoul's letter as well as two photos of the bishop. A reminder on the rally also was included in the Sept. 26 issue. The paper worked closely with those coordinating the rally. The Oct. 3 Courier photo, incidentally, appeared on Page 1.

Politicians And Abortion

EDITOR:

Many Catholic politicians of late have adopted and championed the "I am personally opposed, but ..." logic toward their position on abortion. That catchy rhetoric provides an escape clause by which they can abandon their Catholic beliefs. For the informed Catholic, this Jeckyll and Hyde posturing is totally unacceptable.

God established His set of moral standards through the prophets and saints. Jesus Christ, in founding the church, institutionalized those standards. As members of His church, we are obligated to live and proclaim His universal truths every day.

regardless of one's calling in life.

Devout Catholic politicians who are "personally opposed to abortion, but ..." should abstain or reject abortion legislation -- never vote in favor of it. Their active support of abortion legislation actually demonstrates that they are personally opposed to publicly stating they are a pro-abortion Catholic. Stating their true position would certainly cost them Catholic votes and possibly an election.

Stephen J. Fisher
1901 Honeoye Falls Road #6
Honeoye Falls, N.Y. 14472

RR Has Acted On Abortion

EDITOR:

"When Did Reagan Act on Abortion?" was the headline of Mr. Cusker's letter (C-J 9-12). He went on to elaborate on his own research of the president's actions when he was governor of California.

Please let me remind Mr. Cusker and NSRTL Committee of OUR OWN past mistakes concerning the issue that most disturbs us. In the 1980 campaign, we failed to endorse candidate Reagan for the very reasons enumerated by Mr. Cusker. We THEN had good reason to doubt the man's sincerity, but time has PROVEN US WRONG. Thank God!

In July 1981, the president nominated Sandra Day O'Connor for the U.S. Supreme Court, inflaming us ALL because of her PAST record, which indicated her nomination to be a disastrous error! We were deeply upset when she was unanimously confirmed after much debate. Pro-abortionists were ecstatic. Thank God, we were proven wrong again!

The president has appointed C. Everett Koop as surgeon-general. A stronger pro-life advocate doesn't exist! He has also made other key appointments to his staff which have surely advanced our great cause. ACTIONS DO SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS, as Mr. Cusker aptly stated.

President Reagan has certainly not lacked WORDS either! He has spoken out bluntly, strongly and very frequently against abortion and for a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution. We must honor him for that.

It has been recently pointed out that the president was, and still is, in favor of therapeutic abortions. It is our obligation to inform him

of our strong opposition to this stand or any other like beliefs he may have. But, most importantly, we must look at the alternatives we have before us in this year's elections. Mondale-Ferraro would be a disaster to the pro-life cause in light of the impending new nominations to the Supreme Court.

Bishop O'Connor is absolutely right. Catholics who are Catholics in more than just name should take very seriously the moral implications of a Mondale-Ferraro victory. We are neither liberal nor conservative. We're merely pro-life.

John G. Lentricchia
50 Bly St. PO Box 22966
Rochester, N.Y. 14692

Teens Taking Peace Role

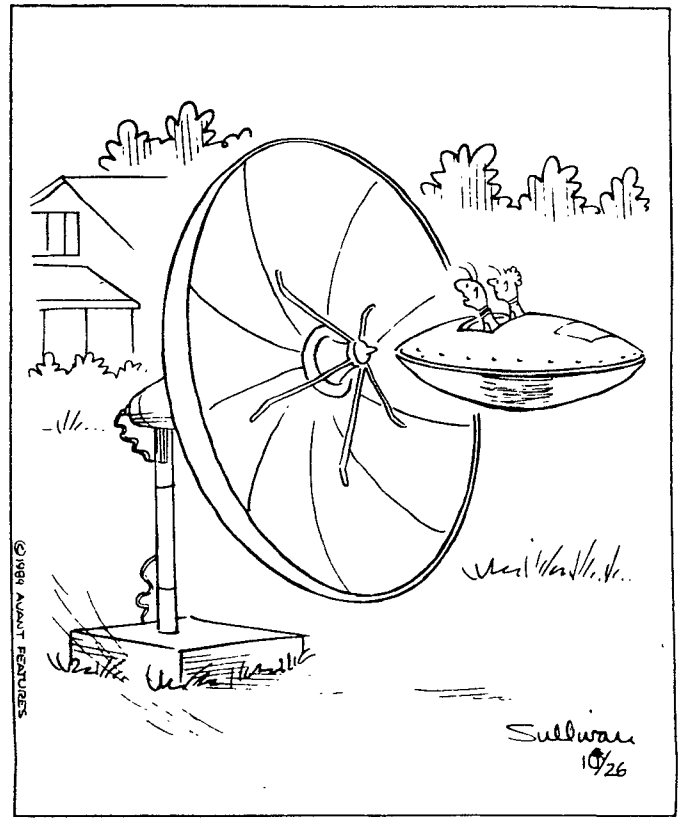
EDITOR:

The weekend of Sept. 28-29, I and some 600 others attended the conference on peace sponsored by the diocese. The main addresses by Father Bryan Hehir and Bishop Clark were excellent input for understanding the issue of peace in our war-threatening time -- both from the perspective of the entire body of U.S. bishops and from the vantage point of our bishop in this our local church.

But especially fruitful for me was participation in the discussions and prayer of the teenagers who also listened to the main addresses and then gathered to help each other assimilate what the Church was teaching them. This was the Youth Convocation which was offered for two youth representatives from each parish and was attached as a special arm of the conference.

Two seniors from St. Mary's in Auburn, Mary Donley and Kevin Powers, went with me and came back renewed and challenged -- their church was speaking to the crying needs of the times and they had discovered that they too were called to be leaders among their peers, in their communities and in their parish.

The discussions carried on by the teens were deep and spiritual. One young man spoke of what had come home to him -- that peacemaking required him to concentrate less on what others are thinking of him and more on what he is thinking of others. Another saw that prayer and hope were aligned and that both were authenticated in action. Prayer and hope implied responsibility. Power was pre-



"APPARENTLY IT'S NOT A FLY-IN CHURCH AFTER ALL."

sent in that group of approximately 50 teens and it was nothing less than the transforming power of Christ.

What also surfaced was that teens included on parish councils sometimes get the feeling that their ideas or suggestions are less significant than those of the adults. Interestingly, this is a young woman sharing this is a youth representative of her parish council and she was in Rochester for the full conference. Two adults from that same parish council had also come. Certainly this teen was part of the small percentage of that parish council becoming informed on such a serious matter. As a confirmed Catholic, she was acting as responsibly as any adult possibly could. A parish council would be foolish not to listen to what she has to offer.

I had a more tangible claim on peace after spending time with those teens. Thank you, Pat Fox and Ann Wegman, for facilitating that satisfying depth experience. And thanks to the teens who grappled thoughtfully, openly and prayerfully with the demands of Christian hope in this nuclear age.

Sister Chris Lloyd
St. Mary's Church
15 Clark St.
Auburn, N.Y. 13021

God Merits Place of Honor

EDITOR:

I just got around to reading Father Hohman's article

on the relocation of the tabernacle in many of the Catholic churches today. In fact, I re-read it a couple of times and still could not find a good explanation as to why it is being done.

As a Catholic, I was taught that the Church is the home of God and as such, He should have the place of honor in it -- namely a tabernacle that is readily seen by all who come to visit with Him. I believe that Father Hohman forgets that priests are the housekeepers of God's home and they really don't have that right to relegate Christ to a less conspicuous spot.

I'm sure that Father Hohman would be very unhappy with his housekeeper if some day when he was expecting a gathering of his friends in the rectory his housekeeper told him that he would have to sit in the far corner of the living room (or maybe even behind the draperies in the dining room) if his friends were there.

An unhappy Christ must be to get the same kind of treatment!

This "new thinking" makes me wonder as to what would happen if some day Christ appeared in one of the churches. Would the priest welcome Him and offer Him the best seat in the house, right up front? Or would he suggest that He sit in the rear of the church and not make Himself so visible?

Ralph Bleier
204 Paddy Hill Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

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.