

Editorial

The Famine In Ethiopia

The photo on Page 1 of this issue is an example of the kind of photo that is worth a thousand words. Short of actually being there, this picture does more than anything else possibly can show the starvation and the accompanying heartbreak of the famine in Ethiopia. Mother and child, despite the increasing callousness of the modern day, is still the

most touching of depictions. And a hungry mother and child is heart-rending.

American Catholics, despite criticism from Cardinal Ratzinger of the Vatican, have always proved to be the heart of generosity. The Ethiopian crisis is the latest case in point. In just four days Oct. 29-Nov. 1, Catholic Relief Services received \$800,000 in donations for Ethiopia. And judging from calls to the diocesan newspaper, the tide of relief is just beginning to roll.

And Rochester diocesans are a perfect microcosm of the the national Catholic community as regards charity. Never have they failed to respond -- from the

floods in our diocese, to the annual ThanksGiving Appeal drive, to the annual Courier-Journal-Catholic Charities Christmas Fund, to earthquakes abroad, to droughts and famines, they answer the bell time and again, even when the answering is difficult because of their own economic problems. And their past record makes it predictable that they will rise to the occasion of helping the tragic Ethiopians.

Individuals and groups wishing to help may send donations to Catholic Relief Services-Ethiopia, care of Diocesan Missions Office, 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

and Opinions

Appeal Fund Suggestion

EDITOR:

It is gratifying to read in the Courier-Journal each year that there is excess money left over from the Thanks Giving Appeal. It would be nice if this money could be used to update or in

some cases used just to maintain our schools, particularly in the rural areas.

It is sad to see Catholic schools close and it sure would be nice to maintain the few parochial schools that are left in the rural area. Most students in rural areas can only attend parochial school because the Catholic

high schools are too far away. Therefore our parochial schools are very important because for many students it is the only Catholic education they can obtain.

Our Lord said, "Let the little children come to Me." We can do this by giving the excess Thanks Giving Appeal money to our Catholic schools that are having financial difficulties.

Editor's Note: The Thanks Giving Appeal office says it appreciates the "beautiful thought" of this letter but points out that there is no excess money derived from the appeal; all of it is already earmarked or is allocated for the following year's appeal to hold down the goal. In addition, part of the Appeal funds collected supports the diocesan Education Department which in turn maintains a Tuition Subsidy Program for any pupils in any parochial school in the diocese needing help. Further information is available from the schools office, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, (716) 328-3210.

Abortionists Queried

EDITOR:

To all those favoring abortion who refer to the fetus, the embryo or whatever term they use to avoid saying baby or human being, I'd like to pose a question. Is the mind not formed until delivery from the womb? Evidently the presence of the soul is too nebulous to grasp. So how about the combination of mind and soul? Neither can be seen. Are they viable or not from the moment of creation of life of a human being? If not, how can it be that a premature baby, safely delivered, has both?

I'd like to know. I was a premature baby, the fourth of five children, one who preceded me was stillborn and I weighed 15 ounces at birth. The doctor who delivered me said I couldn't possibly live and suggested it might be just as well if I didn't. In fact, it was only through months of constant care before I became a



"OUR CHURCH WOMEN ARE ORGANIZING A MACRAME CLASS."

healthy baby. Yet, because I was blessed with parents and grandparents who trusted in the good Lord, here I am, 76 years later, hale and hearty. I'd still like to know at

what point pro-abortionists think I was given a mind and a soul.

Mrs. Rhea M. Gartland
3829 27th Ave. N.
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33710

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.

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Reasoned Response

Recently there was a letter to the editor in the Democrat and Chronicle which made some sad but interesting comments relative to the care of the poor. The author of the letter questioned Desmond Stone about a previous article on the question of how the

"haves" can feed the hungry.

The letter writer went on to say that Stone is working on the assumption that "because one man has money or food, the man who doesn't is automatically his responsibility."

The writer goes on to say, "This sort of assumption ignores the reasons one man has money and food and why the other one does

not." He then makes the following statement:

"What is it that makes possible the wealth and abundance of food in this country? Is it the mindless worship of demons and false gods? Is it the practice of placing the life of a sacred cow above the life of a human being? Is it a focus on mysticism and non-effort, and the thoughtless waiting for some spiritual reward?"

Isn't it interesting that the writer (who, I am sure, would be appalled at this sentence) is repeating on other words the sentiments of Lenin, who said that religion is the opium of the people, because it sets their sights on spiritual rewards?

The writer proceeds to then to say:

"I truly think we should assist these poor, backward, starving peoples also. But not in a way that does nothing more than make them endless parasites. Rather, assist them in a way that will get them off the backs of productive people, who are forever being forced into humanitarianism, altruistic missions by those such as Mr. Stone who do not understand that it is in man's capacity for reason and not his capacity for religion that moves him ahead in life."

Frankly, I don't know whether to be saddened by the letter writer's arrogance or amused by his naivete. I might answer like this:

Dear Mr. Productive Letter Writer,

Let me ask you some questions. Where did your brains, energy and talent come from? Did you confer them on yourself this side of the womb or previously? Did you pick your parents, the place you were born, the school district in which you grew up, the economic level at which you started life? Where did everything come from? Is it self-created, and if so, why were you so lucky to get such a large share to start with?

What the writer of that letter cannot see is that everything we are and have had its origin in a power separate from ourselves (we call this power God). Some people are born into situations not of their own making from which it is impossible they extricate

themselves -- we call this the vicious circle of poverty. Unless we are ready to subscribe to the Neanderthal doctrine of "survival of the fittest," we are called to compassion. Without it there will never be peace and even the "haves" will end up without.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the letter writer and others who think as he does, that our Church has invested a great deal of time and money in the Campaign for Human Development which has as its focus "helping others to help themselves." It is only when we can't help people help themselves that we resort to the dole, but then out of love and compassion, never to "get them off our backs."

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Thanks Giving

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