

# Editorial

## Focus on Baha'is

The brutal regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran continues to oppress members of the Baha'i community in that country. The recent deaths of nine more Baha'is in Iranian jails, raising the reported total of members of the religion killed in Iran for their beliefs to 194, has resulted in a strong, condemnatory statement by the U.S. State Department and an expression of concern by President Reagan.

The president decried the situation in his proclamation concerning the United Nations Human Rights Day and John Hughes of the State Department expanded on it in a special statement:

"We appeal to the Iranian authorities to abide by the spirit of the letter of the Universal Declaration, Article 18 of which affirms, 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in company with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'"

Sadly, such words by the U.N. and by President Reagan will probably fall on deaf ears; the ayatollah is senseless to compassion and freedom. In the meantime, 19 more Baha'is are under death sentence in Iran. They are not revolutionists, not rebels, not

adversaries. They merely preach equality and peace. Unfortunately, the ayatollah and his "religious" cohorts find such sentiment anathema.

The Courier-Journal, aware of a Baha'i community in this diocese, has long been among those working to bring this dastardly situation to greater light. It is pleasing to see that the highest officials of this land of freedom have begun to take notice.

## ND Gem

An idea fit for copying. Notre Dame High School has produced a classy commemorative calendar for 1985. With a full-color cover and plenty of room to make date entries, the calendar is designed as a fund-raiser for the high school.

While some of the photos are of a nostalgic quality, most of them are of the present student body, staff and neighbors of the high school. Thus the calendar has a "yearbook" quality, unusual in a calendar. It sells for \$20 with proceeds going to the high school to offset the cost of educating its 500 students. Anyone interested should contact the Development Office, Notre Dame High School, 1400 Maple Ave., Elmira, N.Y., 14904, (607) 734-2423.

It is a project worth imitating in the years to come by other schools and organizations.

## Human Dignity

The State Catholic Conference has laid out its goals for the next two years. And though Human Dignity is the heading for only one of the five objectives, it is clearly the essential quality of all five.

In addition to Human Dignity, the headings are Economic Security, Education, Health Care and Human Services. It is easily seen that all are related to or are essential ingredients of Human Dignity.

For what chance is there for dignity without economic security? Without proper education? Without health care, especially for the elderly? Without human services such as aid for the disabled, for children?

When one comes right down to it, most of the work of the Church is devoted to the pursuit of human dignity. This goal is well-expressed in the words of Pope John Paul II: "To make life ever more human and to make every element of life correspond to humanity's true dignity."

The Creator seems to have provided his human creations with this protective coating called dignity to withstand the psychological and physical barbs the mind flesh are heir to. When it is eroded, it can be impossible to make it in an often indifferent and sometimes cruel world; with it, nothing is impossible.

The State Catholic Conference has chosen its goal wisely.

## and Opinion

### An Unjust Imprisonment

**EDITOR:**

In July, Ronald Kitchen and George Eng, officers of Auburn Prison's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, attended a NAACP celebration that included outside guests and newspaper reporters.

Kitchen told the audience:

"You have just walked into a time bomb and it's ticking. The dials have been broken off so there is no way to stop it." Eng reportedly said: "We are in a war. Look around at these gun towers if you doubt it. We face the same brutal treatment you people get from the police on the street. Look at these plate shops. We are forced to make millions for the state and get only 16 to 25 cents a day. We are the true victims of the New York State criminal

justice system."

Following a Superintendent's hearing, the two men were placed in punitive segregation for 120 days. According to Auburn's warden, Robert Henderson, the inmates had made "radical and inflammatory" statements that could have jeopardized institutional security. Since then, the Commissioner of Correctional Services has upheld these disciplinary actions.

Interestingly enough, Kitchen's verbal remarks were similar to what he wrote in the invitation letter to outside guests and this letter was not disapproved by Auburn officials. "Do you care that Auburn Prison... is on the verge of going up? It will, you know, unless the outside organizations step in to help bring about prison reconstruction."

Beyond this inconsistency, while I agree with a prison administration's right to restrict speech about weapons manufacturing or speech that calls upon prisoners to be violent or to commit other crimes, freedom of speech and press must otherwise be preserved behind prison walls.

Whether or not one agrees with them, Kitchen and Eng did not advocate violence.

They expressed personal opinions about the prison system.

I appreciate the concern of officials when inmates predict the likelihood of future strife -- and violence at Auburn is already very real -- but I believe Auburn administrators over-reacted to the speeches.

Although Kitchen and Eng were found guilty of creating a disturbance, newspaper accounts of the celebration mention no disturbance and quoted one corrections officer as saying that the NAACP's annual event "relieves tension and it makes our job easier."

Prisons are public institutions, not the private estates of their administrators. Our heritage of "freedom of speech" must remain applicable to these institutions.

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### Sen. Javits Inspiration

**EDITOR:**

Former New York Sen. Jacob Javits has been the deserving recipient of numerous honors and simple words of praise for his determination in overcoming



"MOM! MAKE JASON STOP TRYING SO HARD TO BE GOOD!"

## POPE Catechesis Continues

Vatican City (NC) — Here is the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's remarks in English during his weekly general audience at the Vatican Dec. 12.

In today's audience I wish to continue the introduction which I began last week on the subject of catechesis. We have just listened to a passage from St. Mark's Gospel in which Jesus says that the person who believes and is baptized will be saved. In order for one to have the gift of faith one must first hear the good news of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the faith must be passed on from one who believes to one who wishes to believe. Catechesis implies precisely such a mutual encounter in faith between the one who instructs and the one who receives the instruction.

Traditionally, the title "catechumen" referred to the person who received gradual and systematic instructions in the truths of the faith and in the practice of the Christian moral life. These instructions aimed at preparing a person for baptism and for admission to the Eucharist, that is, for full participation in the life of the Christian community.

The church continues this same work of catechesis in the world today, extending her instructions beyond the institution of the catechumenate itself, in order to offer to all the faithful an ever more profound and meaningful knowledge of the mystery of Christ.



## 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.

## Pope's World Day of Peace Message

Vatican City (NC) — Here is the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's message for the 1985 World Day of Peace, celebrated Jan. 1.

### Peace and Youth Go Forward Together

To all of you who believe in the urgency of peace; to you, parents and educators, who want to be the promoters of peace; to you, political leaders, who bear direct responsibility for the cause of peace; to you, men and women of culture, who seek to build peace in today's civilization; to all of you who suffer for the sake of peace and justice; and above all to you, the young people of the world, whose decisions about yourselves and your vocation in society will determine the prospects for peace today and tomorrow.

To all of you, and to all people of good will, I send my message on the 18th World Day of Peace because peace is an overriding concern, an unavoidable challenge, an immense hope.

1. The problems and the hopes of the world confront us every day.

It is true: the challenge of peace remains with us. We are living in a difficult time when the threats of destructive violence and war are many. Profound disagreements pit different social groups, peoples and nations one against the other. There are many situations of injustice that do not break forth into open conflicts solely because the violence of those who retain power is so great



the declining ability to use his muscles. Intimidating as it may appear, this obstacle hasn't shortchanged Sen. Javits' vitality and inner strength.

Wallowing in self-pity, grief and despair serves no useful or practical purpose,

except to prolong misery. Doing the direct opposite of this would truly define the meaning behind the message Jacob Javits is conveying to society.

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that it deprives the powerless of the energy and opportunity to claim their rights. Yes, there are people today who are prevented by totalitarian regimes and ideological systems from exercising their fundamental right to decide for themselves about their own future. Men and women today suffer insupportable insults to their human dignity through racial discrimination, forced exile and torture. They are victims of hunger and disease. They are prevented from practicing their religious beliefs or from developing their own culture.

It is important to discern the ultimate causes of this state of conflict that makes peace precarious and unstable. The effective promotion of peace demands that we should not limit ourselves to deploring the negative effects of the present situation of crisis, conflict and injustice. What we are really required to do is to destroy the roots that cause these effects. Such ultimate causes are to be found especially in the ideologies that have dominated our century and continue to do so, manifesting themselves in political, economic and social systems and taking control of the way people think. These ideologies are marked by a totalitarian attitude that disregards and oppresses the dignity and transcendent values of the human person and his or her rights. Such an attitude seeks political, economic and social domination with a rigidity of purpose and method that is closed to any authentic dialogue or real sharing. Some of these ideologies have even become a sort of false secularistic religion, claiming to bring salvation to the whole of humanity but without providing any proof of its own truth.

But violence and injustice have deep roots in the heart of each individual, of each one of us, in people's everyday ways of thinking and behaving. We have only to think of the conflicts and divisions within families, between married couples, between parents and children, in the schools, in professional life, in the relationships between social groups and between the generations. We have only to think of the cases where the basic right to life of the weakest and most defenseless human beings is violated.

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