

Editorial

Infamous

Tuesday next marks the 11th anniversary of that date which is living as much in infamy as Dec. 7, 1941.

It was on Jan. 22, 1973, that the Supreme Court dealt millions on millions of unborn children a death blow and in so doing scarred the national psyche to a degree we'll probably never know in this life.

Ever since, Americans of all stripes, of every and no religion, from every cut and walk of life, men, women and children have been trying to overturn that heinous decision.

The opposition, too, has been formidable, ranging from those who sincerely believe in pro-choice to those who actually believe in abortion either out of greed or for such misguided reasons as birth control. The opposition has ranged from those who stand for their convictions without rancor or malice to those who use any means, for instance the smear tactics used by Planned Parenthood, to gain their ends.

The debate has raged as some 1.5 million unborn babes are put to death yearly in a nation that once prided itself on being the freest country on earth. The land of opportunity (babies need not apply).

It is perhaps useless to recount the arguments on either side here but three rather recent developments should be added to consideration of this moral problem.

One, a man has been re-elected president of the United States by an overwhelming landslide despite the fact that he has declared himself openly to be anti-abortion. This belies the notion of politicians with weaker conviction that it is necessarily fatal to their careers to oppose liberalized abortion.

Then, even more recently, a Gallup Poll showed that most Americans indeed oppose liberalized abortion, another lesson for those politicians who fear taking an honest stand on the issue.

And in a very different sphere, a most recent and horrible development has been taking place in Communist China. According to the Washington Post, it has become policy there to perform abortions on unwilling women, new mothers are implanted with intrauterine devices and women of childbearing age are sometimes subjected to sterilization roundups.

The Post story said that any mother who has one child and becomes pregnant again is required to have an abortion.

While Americans must concentrate on efforts to stop the carnage in their own nation, it is chilling to realize that in the past five years in China, 53 million abortions were performed.

What does a Chinese birth control official say of this: "It's more humane to kill children before they are born than to bring them into a society of too many people." Sheer hypocrisy! For shame! A pity God doesn't give the slaughtered unborn babies the voice to express their views on the subject. Who made the choice that the unborn must die? Those who are already living! What if, heaven forbid, someone should decide to thin out the ranks of those already on earth to make room for new blood? How humane would that be?

It is but a short step from the constant teaching of groups such as Planned Parenthood who promote abortion as a birth control method, and those who challenge the consciences of the impoverished to have abortions in the interest of "society" to actually having a government enforce such measures. From sanction to law is often a small difference.

Those who are not necessarily pro-abortion but who feel that it is up to the individual mother to decide should ponder the situation in China where choice has really been stripped from mothers. Is it really impossible for it to happen in the United States of America? To believe that, one would have to feel that there is no individual, no group that would promote enforced abortion as a birth control policy. Can anyone say that with surety?

However, when Americans United for Separation of Church and State protests U.S. Postal Service plans to issue a stamp commemorating Father Junipero Serra, it should worry over whether the group has enough to do. Father Serra was a pioneer and missionary in early California. He died in 1784 and the government wants to honor his memory 200 years later for his historical significance. Separation of church and state should not involve itself in such petty pursuits as trying to blot out the memory of a historical figure...because he happens to be a clergyman. It might be that when Americans United takes on such small issue it diminishes its impact on more crucial matters.

The protest incidentally was made by Rev. Robert Maddox, a Baptist minister who directs Americans United. Is it possible that his involvement in the governmental process is a violation of his group's credo?

Stickier?

And perhaps Americans should wonder if separation of church and state will be violated next Monday when President Reagan puts his hand on the Bible and swears, "so help me God" in taking his oath of office.

After all there is far more religion in the Washington scenario, which in one form or another has pledged allegiance to the Almighty ever since 1789 when George Washington offered "fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules the universe," than there is in a postage stamp honoring historical figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or Father Junipero Serra.

What it amounts to is that these men taking the oath of office down through the decades are actually praying publicly for guidance in an official ceremony at the heart of our government. And these are not Postal Service employes but indeed the very leaders of our nation.

Sticky

The idea behind Americans United for Separation of Church and State is to be applauded. No individual or organization aware of the calamity so often caused by the mingling of religion and politics should want anything less than a gap between the two. After all, each has enough of its own problems without compounding them by comingling.

and Opinions

Renovation Opposed

EDITOR:

Mother of Sorrows has been our parish for more than 25 years. We have had all of our 10 children graduate from this grammar school. Our main family activities for more than 25 years have evolved around our church and school whether it be educational, sports or religion. Our beautiful church was built 17 years ago and it is a magnificent tribute to the priests and people who built this huge parish.

Now there is a parish council which seeks to renovate this church to the extent of over \$200,000. This money has been left to the parish by Father George Wood, our former pastor, supposedly to be used for general maintenance. This renovation would remove many of the things in the church, such as a mural of Christ in the sanctuary and

the stations of the cross and a beautiful crucifix which was in the original church. Also the tabernacle which was created by an artistic parishioner would be relocated so that it would be removed from all display. The pews would be turned so we could face one another and other major changes would take place in the sanctuary and on the altar itself. The council states that the reasons for these renovations stem from portions of Vatican II which calls for liturgical changes.

Nowhere in the 16 documents of Vatican II can we find instructions regarding the specifics of change as mentioned above. We see the celebration of the Eucharist as the focus of the Sunday assembly with the tabernacle, crucifix and Blessed Mother statue all an integral part of this service.

The renovation being planned is a serious and genuine concern to many people of the parish. Nine hundred and eighty-five

signatures have been obtained on a petition opposing this renovation. The parish council has chosen to ignore these signatures.

Many Catholics are deeply worried and troubled with their daily problems. They need a solid spiritual basis for prayer and meditation but this is difficult to find in the sterile atmosphere of some of the contemporary churches.

We believe that the generous bequest of Father Wood should be used in a much more positive way benefiting the youth of the parish.

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Reading Misleading

EDITOR:

On the beautiful feast of the Holy Family, the epistle of St. Paul instructing wives to be submissive to their husbands was read at Mass. During the homily that followed the scripture readings, no clarification of explanation of this admonishment was offered at the liturgy I attended with my two teenagers.

They were appalled to think that the Catholic Church teaches that wives should be submissive to their husbands as their "duty to the Lord." I explained that St. Paul was addressing a particular group of people in a certain time and culture and the words were not to be taken literally in modern times. (They share my support for equal rights for women.)

How many other people in church that day, young or old, also got the impression that "wifely submission" is a

teaching of the church? They could have very easily gotten such an impression when the homily on family relationships failed to point out otherwise, and instead, referred to the passage as "a beautiful reading."

When that reading is repeated in the next liturgical cycle, homilists should be ready to explain that the church is not teaching wifely submission!

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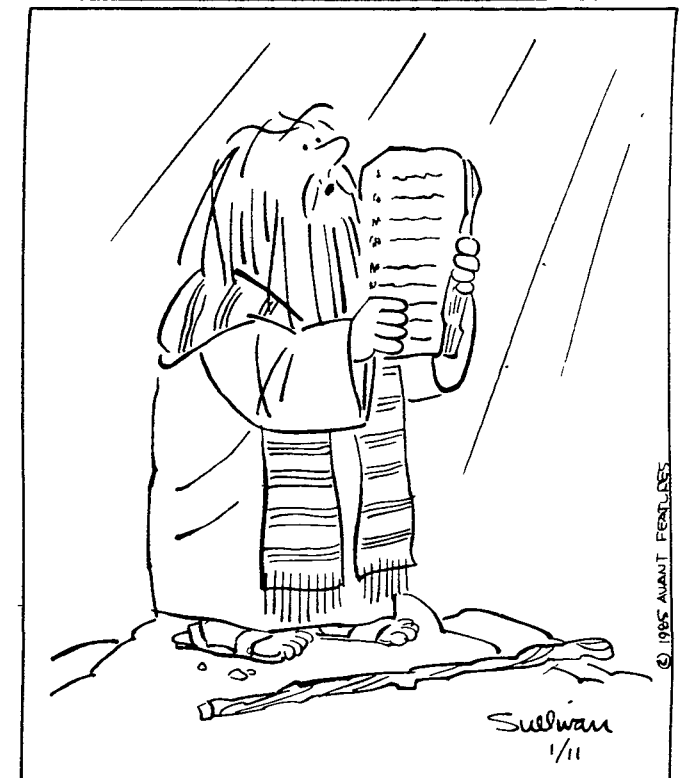
Sharing Villa Theme

EDITOR:

The children and adolescents in care at St. Joseph's Villa of Rochester enjoyed a bounteous Christmas season thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the greater Rochester community.

On behalf of the children and staff, thank you to the many individuals, families, organizations and businesses who gave of themselves and their bounty to make the holidays brighter for those here. Christmas was a richer celebration for all of us at the Villa because we felt such an outpouring of concern, such a desire to help from so wide a variety of people.

And, in an effort to learn that 'tis more blessed to give than receive, the youths at the Villa did what they could to spread the season's joy. Some of the girls hosted a party for clients from the Association for Retarded Citizens. Students in our school collected pennies for the Uncle Eddie Meath Christmas Fund and made cards for those living in area nursing homes.



"I FIND I NEED ANOTHER RULE OF BEHAVIOR FOR THOSE WHO DRIVE THEIR OXEN OUT OF THE PARKING PENS."

Sharing is the hallmark of the Christmas holidays and we offer sincere thanks to those who shared what they could with the children of St. Joseph's Villa.

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Why Not Feed Birds?

EDITOR:

If you are looking for an idea for a birthday present or something like that why not get a bird feeder? Our fine feathered friends have a normal body temperature of 106 degrees so it takes daily feeding to keep them well in

winter. Think of a place the feeder can be put, out of the reach of cats, like at the top of a metal pole. They can also use fresh water each day if there's no snow on the ground. A bird house makes a good shelter from the winter winds.

The birds will reward you by their beauty, antics and inspiring songs. They also make great natural insect eaters. This will mean you don't need to waste your money on insecticides. Now that we know that insecticides are made from methyl isocyanate, there doesn't seem any point in using them.

Mary Rita Crowe
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Editor's Note: St. Francis would agree.

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.