

Editorial

Good Work

The Courier-Journal has always documented and praised the generosity of diocesans, not only for supporting such local causes as the annual Christmas drive and the Thanks Giving Appeal but also for helping others in more remote places -- such as in diocesan missions in Selma and Latin America and in the current Catholic Relief Services campaign for Ethiopia.

So it should come as no surprise when a Council of Foundations study reported recently that religious groups far out-donated corporate and foundation philanthropic groups in charitable giving.

In 1983, for instance, the religious sector contributed some \$7.5 billion, easily exceeding the \$3.1 billion given by corporate givers and the \$3.4 billion from foundations. And, dear donors, that does not include the millions of hours of volunteer time donated by church members.

While, obviously, the bulk of such charity is provided by individuals, it is worth noting that a large portion comes from structures established by the Church, such as Catholic Charities.

The study reported that social justice work and other programs, including self-help programs to attack causes of poverty and disenfranchisement have become almost as prevalent as more traditional charitable work, such as feeding the hungry or providing shelter for the homeless.

Chalk up one for the Campaign for Human Development!

Not to promote an ego trip -- for Americans of every religious stripe are involved -- it is nice to note that Catholics "are more active in almost every category" of religious philanthropy, even though that may be misleading since there are more Catholics than any other religious group in the United States.

Want to get even more of a lift? The report says that Catholics and other religious groups are cooperating in providing assistance -- "a Methodist group has been giving to a local Catholic Charities group" and "elderly members -- 80 years and up -- of a Catholic women's order have joined with a Methodist group to feed 70 people three times a week."

The report specifically cited the Campaign for Human Development as "a model grant-making organization," but that, paradoxically, Catholics as a whole are behind other religions in such community-based organizing.

The "but" phrases are noted here only to give a fair picture of the overall report. The important facts and the bulk of the report, however, are concerned with the fact that religious people, Catholics most definitely included, really are about their Father's work and are not merely the monolithic "moralists" often depicted in some quarters.

and Opinions

Abortion Evil Taken Lightly?

EDITOR:

I would like to know why the Catholic Church, its bishops, priests and ministries are not more active or involved with the struggle against the abortion holocaust. This is not just another issue to banter about over tea but an everyday massacre of unborn children carried out with more coldness and calculation than the Nazis could have mustered.

People screamed murder at scenes of children being killed in Vietnam but remain ominously silent when confronted with abortion.

History has condemned those who knew of the Jewish holocaust first-hand and did nothing. In the future, when all the smoke has cleared, will those who survive look back at us with disgust because of our silence, indifference and uninvolvedness.

According to a recent news poll, 52 percent of all Catholics polled were for abortion on demand. How these people could rationalize the taking of a human life often for reasons as lame as inconvenience and still claim to be Christian is unfathomable. Where is the leadership from the pulpit that should be teaching with passion that it is wrong?

I do not understand church priorities. The bishops gathered en masse to discuss and write a letter on the nuclear threat and peace. Human life is being lost by the millions each year through abortion. What issue or debate could be more important than to stop the senseless and brutal violence against our unborn children? The murders are happening now as you read this. Every time a baby is aborted a piece

of our future potential as a nation and a people is lost forever never again to be the same because each one of those unborn is an individual with forever untapped resources and gifts that they never had a chance to give us. We all will feel the loss because we have no idea how this waste of human potential will devastate our future.

Mary Ellen Frisch
2 Blossomdale Drive
Hamlin, N.Y. 14464

Editor's Note: Reader Frisch's revulsion and frustration at abortion is justified. However, the bishops of the United States, of New York State and as individuals have spoken often and passionately about the disgrace of abortion. Our efforts should be spent in convincing courts, lawmakers and those who are apathetic or pro-choice about the evil and consequences of abortion.

Letter Called Socialistic

EDITOR:

I was deeply disturbed to learn that our moral leaders apparently have forgotten the difference between charity and socialism. The American bishops endorsing statism implicitly in the pastoral letter on the economy was even more unpleasant to see, especially since the dangers of statism can be seen as clearly in the murders by the state in Poland, El Salvador, South Africa, Ethiopia and elsewhere.

Naturally concern for the poor is laudable, but the bishops' decision to place their trust in government to deal with it is a serious mistake. Throughout history, governments have proven themselves only capable of destroying wealth (creating

poverty) and oppressing people. The only economic system which has ever moved any significant number of people out of poverty into prosperity is capitalism. Capitalism is more moral because it does not depend on government force and intimidation to operate as socialism does.

Do we really want Christian charity to be imposed by government force? This country was founded on three unique principles -- limited size and power in government, separation of church and state, and respect for individual human rights. The bishops' proposals threaten all three of these principles.

Besides, such cradle-to-grave socialism has already been tried in England and elsewhere, and has always failed to work. Sacrificing human rights won't end poverty.

I move we abandon these "In Government We Trust" proposals and return to a policy of "In God We Trust" instead.

Steven Becker
2173 Five Mile Line Rd.
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

China Way Doesn't Apply

EDITOR:

I am writing in response to your editorial of Jan. 16 on the subject of abortion. I was particularly struck that you cited the Washington Post report of forced contraception, sterilization and abortion in China.

The movement which affirms a woman's reproductive freedom has always called itself pro-choice rather than pro-abortion because its primary assumption has consistently been not that abortion is always -- or ever -- the best or most ethical choice but that no government may ever usurp an individual's right to weigh her options, consult her conscience, and make that choice for herself.

In China, of course, there is no general assumption of individual freedom in any number of choices which we hold to be fundamentally personal -- occupation, political party, religious belief. Most of us Americans have strong opinions about which are right or wrong -- moral or immoral -- choices in these areas and attempt in various non-coercive ways to win others to our points of view. Few of us would want to legally require others to share our views. In China, there are other non-choices or they are

choices which the state presumes to make for the individual in the interest of the greater good.

Your intention in citing enforced abortion in China seems to be to indicate a "slippery slope" in that direction should abortion remain a woman's individual choice here. I would argue that any law which gives the state permission to override her decision to bear or not to bear a child is a step in that very direction.

Barbara Clark
3383 Laurel Ct.
Walworth, N.Y. 14568

Send Seeds To Missioners

EDITOR:

"Any urchin can tell how many seeds there are in an apple but only God how many apples are in a seed." So says an ancient mission almanac.

In 1984, the Franciscans transhipped about 60,000 pounds of garden seeds to many missionaries and need peoples all over the world. Put together, the seeds would have made a garden of 25,000 acres of plants. St. Paul might have added, "I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow" 1 Cor. 3:6.

Some parcels of seeds traveled via sailors from many nations out of the ports of Galveston, Houston and New Orleans.

The readers of the Courier-Journal are invited to send to us the names and addresses of three of their missionary friends abroad and we will mail them direct 200 packets of garden seeds (valued at \$100 each) to anywhere in the world. We will be able to cover the cost of the postage, if your readers choose. The addresses of each missionary should be printed clearly on a 3x5 piece of paper and sent to us.

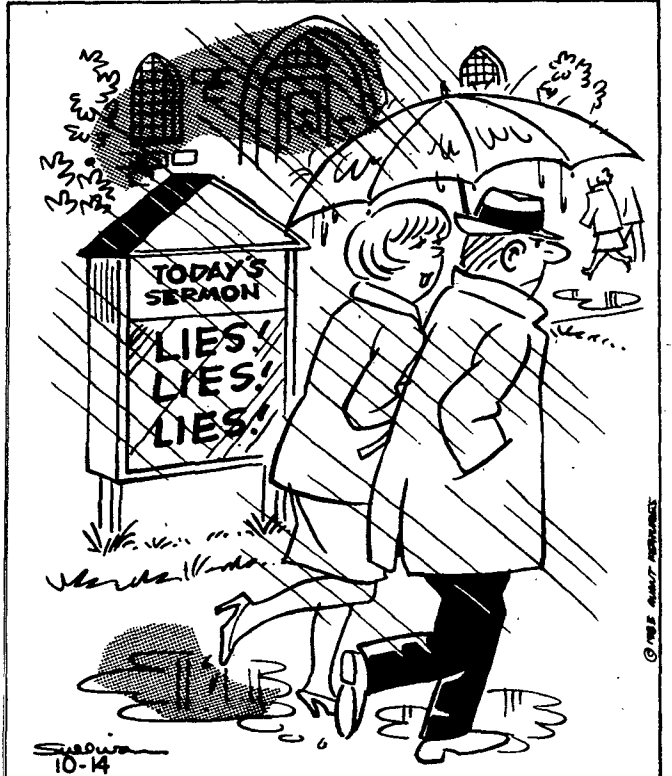
We want to share these wonderful gifts of God, as beautiful links of encouragement, life support and peace symbols on our earthly pilgrimage -- as long as our supply lasts.

Father Aloys Held OFM
Franciscan Missions
1615 Vine St.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45210

Thanks For Response

EDITOR:

We would like to write and thank the people who read the Courier-Journal for responding to the Spiritual Bouquet collected from July to September for our Holy Father.



"I DOUBT IF IT'LL BE ABOUT TV WEATHERMEN."

Your spirited gift of prayers was presented to Pope John Paul II during the offering of gifts at Holy Mass in Winnipeg, Canada on Sept. 16, 1984. Our leader is most appreciative of the prayers offered in Holy Masses, sacrifices, rosaries, and other special prayers for the coming year.

From tiny children barely able to draw or write to the elderly who were shaky of hand and uncertain if they would live to fulfill their year's promise, the letters came. We received over 2,000 pledges from people in 38 states and Canada.

The universality of the Catholic Church was so evident in the spiritual bouquet and in the celebration at Winnipeg with people of so many cultures participating that day.

Since the Winnipeg trip, our dear Bishop, Most Rev. Justin Driscoll of the Fargo diocese, went suddenly home to eternity. May we ask you also to remember his soul in your prayers and to pray for our diocese in the selection of our new bishop.

Thank you for your generous response and sincere dedication to our Holy Father.

Mark and Nancy Emmel
1013 N. First
Fargo, N.D. 58102

Thanks For Donations

EDITOR:

Our 1985 "Weekend with the Stars" telethon for cerebral palsy is now history. But the generosity and support of 6,000 friends in this community will live on in our hearts and in the lives of handicapped children and adults.

The \$130,413 contributed to this telethon will give hundreds of handicapped persons new opportunities for mobility and independence in their lives. These funds will help purchase educational and therapy equipment and continue important projects such as therapeutic horseback riding for children, consumer training for adults, and special athletic programs for both young and old. In short, our handicapped children and adults will have the chance to learn many of the skills most of us take for granted in our lives.

As UCPA telethon chairperson and the parent of a handicapped child, I am deeply grateful for the support of this community. I speak, too, on behalf of the entire United Cerebral Palsy Association -- board members, staff, volunteers and clients -- in extending heartfelt thanks to those 6,000 friends who have shown us such beautiful support!

R. Judson Sloman
Telethon Chairperson
United Cerebral Palsy
Association of the Rochester
Area, Inc.

Columnist Congratulated

EDITOR:

I wish to congratulate Father Albert Shamon on his Jan. 23 column. We all know that God's ways are not our ways and that God will triumph in the end. It is nice, however, to hear it said by such an erudite person as Father Shamon.

Isobel McCarthy
1116 Hoffman St.
Elmira, N.Y. 14905

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.