

Editorial

A Challenging, Exciting Endeavor

It has been a month of many transitions here at the Courier-Journal. As noted in an editor's note two weeks ago, the restaffing of the editorial department is now complete, and progress is being made in restructuring the business staff.

During this period, we in the editorial department have been experimenting with a variety of new approaches to covering the large area encompassed by the Diocese of Rochester. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the changes we have made in the area of graphic design. We are trying to develop a consistent and attractive graphic format for the

paper and are very interested in gaining readers' opinions on the way the "new" Courier-Journal looks.

In what may be a less-obvious move, we have placed great emphasis on reaching out to areas outside Monroe County and will continue to do so in the months ahead. For example, last Wednesday, photographer Jeff Goulding and I spent a day on the road visiting the parishes of St. Francis of Assisi in Auburn and Immaculate Conception in Ithaca, with a stop along the way to look into the activities of Catholic students on the Cornell University campus. We traveled over 200 miles in 13 hours and

returned to Rochester at 11 p.m., after a long and interesting day of meeting people and listening to their concerns about the Courier-Journal's coverage of outlying areas.

We feel that to serve the entire diocese well we must actively go out into the diocese — to the schools, parishes, and individuals who are involved in events and projects interesting to our readership at large. This obviously puts a strain on a staff of three and requires us to group such assignments together by locale.

We feel, however, that the time has come for us to make our intentions

known to the various community organizers and to all of our readers. We may not always be able to attend specific functions and we will be forced to spread the amount of coverage around in order to be fair to all parties. But we want our readers to know that we are always willing to hear their suggestions on story ideas and hope they will make us aware of newsworthy events in all areas of the diocese.

We hope that you are as enthusiastic as we are about the potential for growth at the Courier-Journal and that you wish us well in this challenging and exciting endeavor.

and Opinions

Woman Presents Another View of the Abortion Debate

To the Editor:

I have read letters to the editor from persons who feel abortion is morally wrong and others who feel abortion is a matter of choice. I would like to present a side of the abortion debate that few people consider. That is the position of one who has had an abortion.

This is what the "right to choose" meant to me: In 1980 I aborted my first child. I was told at Planned Parenthood that this little "blob of tissue" would be as easily removed as a wart. Terminating a pregnancy, I was told, was no more significant than removing a tiny blood clot in my uterus. "Sounds harmless," I reasoned. Exercising the right to choose, I opted for abortion.

At that time no other options, such as

adoption or single parenting, were explained. At the abortion clinic I was not administered pain killers. When the suction aspirator was turned on I felt like my entire insides were being torn from me. Three-quarters of the way through the procedure I looked down and to my right and there I saw the bits and pieces of my baby floating in a pool of blood. When I screamed, "I killed my baby!" the counsellor in attendance told me to shut up. Suddenly I felt very sad and alone.

But the worst was yet to come. I was not forewarned about the deep psychological problems I would encounter in the months and years to follow. I was never told that I would have nightmares about babies crying in the night. Neither was it explained

previous to the abortion that I would experience severe depressions in which I would contemplate suicide. I didn't mourn the loss of my appendix, so why would I grieve the passing of an enigmatic uterine blob? The answer was the it wasn't a mere "blob of tissue;" it was a living baby. I realized it the moment I saw his dismembered limbs. I realized too late.

By now the reader may be asking him/herself, "Isn't this an extreme example of an abortion experience?" Actually, no. Mine was a routine suction abortion. Millions have been done. Some women have had worse experiences than mine. There are women I know of who have themselves delivered their own dead babies following a "safe, legal" saline abortion. After

poisoning, the baby thrashes around for a couple of hours as he is suffocated, choked and burned to death. It's a horrible death. Some, however, are born alive and left to die.

If abortion is so good for women, then why do 5-10 percent of these women become sterile following abortion? Why do women who've had an abortion have a higher incidence of suicide than other women? And why do the chances of losing a subsequent wanted baby double or even quadruple following a safe, legal abortion. Since when has death become good for us?

Karen Sullivan
Arizona State President
Women Exploited by Abortion
Taylor, Arizona

Prisons Must Be More Responsive to Inmates' Needs

To the Editor:

The Courier-Journal has published two letters of mine this year that criticize the Auburn prison administration for punishing two inmates who spoke against institutional conditions at a NAACP picnic and the State Commission of Correction's failure to properly investigate the matter.

Ronald Kitchen, one of the involved inmates, is concerned not only about freedom of speech for prisoners, but also that the public be aware of the need for prison reform: "Prisons must be reconstructed or they will surely explode. The

community should be made to share in the responsibility of ... ensuring that prison programs are directed towards serving the community's needs."

Otherwise, says Kitchen, present conditions embitter inmates who will eventually be released and who may continue to be threats to societal peace and security.

Is prison reform necessary? Earlier this year an audit of New York's prisons by the state comptroller reported that the prisons are being operated inefficiently, are wasting money and are plagued by growing crime. Recently the usually timid Commission of

Corrections criticized prison health programs as being understaffed, inefficient and ineffective. Overcrowding, violence and inmate idleness are ever-present.

On January 16, Gerald Wadman, a penal of mine at the ill-famed New Mexico Penitentiary wrote me. Wadman, active in counseling troubled youth brought into the prison for a glimpse of their possible futures, was sad that his fiancée had broken off their engagement, but added "life must go on." He also said "There was more trouble at this prison, and it looks like a long, hot summer this year. I may attempt a transfer back to

the East Coast toward the end of the year. You take care, Joel, keep in touch."

Three days later, Wadman was found hanging in his cell, a towel stuffed in his mouth and throat. Prison officials say this was a suicide. Wadman's mother writes me "We don't believe this as he had too much to live for. You know what these places are like. Gerald wrote he had many fears. I often wondered what they were, and it still haunts me."

According to one New Mexico newspaper: "Wadman's life at the state penitentiary was filled with many activities. His death there is surrounded in controversy." Wadman's death is also symbolic of the mystery and silence that enclose our prisons.

The concern and involvement of ordinary citizens are needed to penetrate the massive walls of these institutions and to make them more responsive to the needs of our society.

Joel Freedman
329 N. Main St.
Canandaigua

Philippine Seminary Seeks Donations

To the Editor:

An Appeal from a Minor Seminary in the Third World:

In the states, there are many private foundations helping worthwhile activities, (see February 20 issue, pg. 4) We read about foundations, trust funds, endowment funds, last wills and charities helping a lot of good activities locally and nationally. If only, we

have been longing, these charitable organizations would extend more their fields of interest to the Third World! The Third World will be ameliorated from their economic crisis. There is a biblical saying: 'The least you did to my brethren, you did it to ME.'

By June 10 we shall begin the school year 1985-86. We shall have 60 young boys for the

first year class at the Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary, Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. In all we shall have 145 high school seminarians from the small Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia, Vigan. Many of the seminarians come from low-income families. Each seminarian pays \$33 monthly for board and studies. Do you not find it rather low compared with your present economic situation? In your charity may you increase the fee. We get a good number of boys for the high school priestly formation, only they could not afford.

May the readers help the seminary in general, not individually in their charities, wills, bequests and mites. May you please relay our SOS to foundations, to charitable organizations and good-hearted people. IRS tax exemption number can be provided for grants donated through a Catholic Fund agency in the States. We want to repair and improve the seminary for a conducive place for priestly formation. May this appeal move the hearts of the readers to help. All gifts will be duly acknowledged and receipted. Please send your donations to:

Father Raymundo Gracia, Rector
Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary
Vian, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

Mary Rita Crowe
2052 E. Main St.
Rochester

Insecticides Upset Balance of Nature

To the Editor:

It's wonderful to hear the dawn chorus of birds these days and see which ones I can identify — robins, bobwhites, mourning doves, cardinals, towhees, bluejays, chickadees and catbirds. You can likely pick out more than I. It's such a joy to hear them then and through the day. I need a bird Sherlock Holmes to tell me which the one is that sings at 4:30 a.m. when it's pitch dark outside. (Maybe it likes the lack of competition then.) Of the 9,000 species of birds in the world we have our good share, but I haven't seen a bluebird in years.

Each kind of bird has its own diet. There's even the New York State official bird, the nuthatch, that creeps down a tree trunk head first to eat the bugs the other kinds of birds miss on the way up.

This is a small part or section of nature's

plan called the "balance of nature." The balance of nature makes sure that no one kind or species of anything, plant or animal, fish or birds, "takes over," because everything is related and depends on each other. But when we use unneeded toxic chemicals in the soil, air and water the balance is upset.

Natural controls are taken away. The good bugs are killed that would normally eat the "bad" bugs so then trouble starts. The sad fact is that no one knows how long the toxic chemicals from weed killers and insecticides stay in the soil, air and water. And they have been traced even after being used there 20 years before and followed through the food chain to man at the top of it.

'Our Father' for Peace

To the Editor:

If you want peace...pray!

At the YOW (Yates, Ontario, Wayne) Regional Assembly April 20 in Newark, at the workshop "Called to Give Life," those attending were given insight into the needs of our society and reminded of the peace Jesus bestowed on those around Him.

One gentleman who was present suggested we go back to our parishes and ask everyone in our churches to say one Our Father each day for peace. "Not a multiplication of

words" just a plea by all to the giver of graces daily for peace in our world.

Too good of an idea to be regional — wouldn't it be marvelous if the entire diocese would participate and, perhaps through peace organizations or individuals, to get our Christian brothers and sisters in the Protestant churches to join us?

Peg Barbalace
Cochairwoman
Phelps People for Peace



Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They should be sent to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 1½ 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 writers' own styles.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space reserved for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent to other publications or persons. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.