

Editorial

Difficult choices

This week was one of difficult decisions for the staff of the Courier-Journal. In general, it is our policy not to cover police matters that involve the Church in some way, but do not directly concern Church teaching. For that reason, we decided in May not to cover the case in which an employee of the diocesan print shop was charged with grand larceny.

This week, however, we were forced to reconsider. When an assistant principal of a Catholic high school is charged with kidnapping two young boys, the matter ceases to be merely a "police case" and becomes one of concern to all members of the diocese, especially parents.

The decision was not simply whether to cover the case, but how to cover it as well. The reports carried by some media left out some aspects of the case we eventually chose to include. Without that information, reports of the case are not only confusing

but also leave much to the imagination. Leaving the door open to speculation is oftentimes more inflammatory than making a full statement of the facts as one knows them.

That decision was not easily made. The full report we carry this week on Page 1 is not a pleasant one — for readers or reporters and editors. Yet we feel it must be done, both out of a sense of journalistic integrity and to eliminate unnecessary speculation about the case.

We hope, therefore, that all of our readers — parishioners as well as diocesan employees — will understand that we did not present this report of the case without lengthy consideration of the pros and cons; without looking seriously at our own motivations and the way in which the story will affect readers, Cardinal Mooney High School and the diocese at large.

Catholics for Free Choice should obey Church teaching on abortion

To the Editor:

It was good to see as much space devoted to the abortion issue in a recent Courier issue (July 31) as there was. I hope that issue wasn't just a token issue for the year, seeing as abortion has taken more lives than all the wars put together. There are all sorts of fasts and prayer vigils for the nuclear threat, but when it comes to the innocent unborn, this diocese all of a sudden becomes comatose.

Letters of recommendations are referred to "someone else" who never gets back to you. Just ask some pro-life Catholics (who are active) who have tried to get anti-abortion programs into their respective parishes about the kind of receptiveness they have gotten. It is at best like climbing Mt. Everest in the blizzard season. If you are anti-nuke you have an instant in; anti-abortion and the ice just drips off the clerical garb.

In an article in that issue ("Neither Side Expects Court To Overturn Abortion Ruling," Page 11), the head of Catholics for a Free Choice poo-hooed the idea that there would even be a chance of changing the Supreme Court's decision on abortion. Why they call themselves Catholics is a mystery to me. The Church is against abortion (the Roman Catholic Church, that is; the newly emerging American Catholic Church is another puzzle). Canon Law Number 1398, in the new code (effective Nov. 27, 1983) gives the following translation from the Latin: "Those who successfully abort a living human fetus bring on themselves instant excommunication." If you don't like the rules and regulations of an organization, quit it.

Organizations like Catholics for a Free Choice give credibility where it doesn't belong and successfully muddy the waters for others who are trying to find the truth. It would have been great if the Church's teaching on abortion were mentioned in that article as opposed to their do-your-own-thing philosophy. They pick and choose what fits into their particular way of thinking and still call themselves Catholics. Perhaps Catholics for a Free Choice should be made aware of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on The Declaration of Procured Abortion,

issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, an official statement of the Holy See: Whatever the civil law may decree in this matter, it must be taken as absolutely certain that a person may never obey an intrinsically unjust law, such as a law approving abortion in principle. One may not take part in any movement to sway public opinion in favor of such a law, nor may one vote for that law. One could not take part in applying such a law."

Pope John Paul II has written eloquently on the effects of abortion. "Every single abortion is an incalculable blow to the moral order ordained by Almighty God," and "The child is that delicate spot around which the morality of families and hence the morality of whole nations and of society is either formed or broken." How can we expect to have peace and harmony when the violence of abortion is interwoven into the fabric that is America? Let us not forget the fifth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." That came directly from God, or so I was taught. I don't recall any "amendment" to that commandment permitting the killing of unborn babies.

So, even if you don't hear much from the pulpit about abortion, and Catholics for a Free Choice are smugly saying that you really can choose abortion, the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church say otherwise. I would have liked to hear this from our Church leaders, pastors and priests, but to find out I had to do research on my own.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: We really can't expect our Church leaders — local, national or worldwide — to speak about abortion every week. The world has many other problems that also need some consideration. But we believe members of all parishes will be hearing quite a bit on the subject of abortion toward the end of this month and the beginning of October. Respect Life Sunday, a program of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, is scheduled for October 6. We'll have more details as that date approaches.

Writer protests second use of 'submission' epistle

To the Editor:

Again, on Sunday, August 25, the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians instructing wives to be submissive to their husbands was read at Mass. We had just been subjected to this outdated idea in late December, on the feast of the Holy Family.

So again, I must protest! Most 20th century American women do not believe that "wives should submit to their husbands

in everything" as St. Paul admonishes. Why is this particular reading selected twice within 10 months to be read aloud at Mass? I find the insensitivity of the powers that be regarding the issue of equality for women totally infuriating.

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And opinions

Falwell: A case of the vapors

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is one of a series of periodic columns by Don McEvoy of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

By Don McEvoy

Watching the Rev. Jerry Falwell's press conference at the airport a few nights ago, on his return from a brief visit to South Africa, created a sense of *deja vu*. There he stood, right up there in front of God, the television cameras and everybody, pompously giving us the inside scoop on what the black folks "really" want.

It was a scenario right out of the American South in the early '60s. I saw it often. White politicians and white preachers were always in front of microphones explaining that, all the evidence to the contrary, the black folks were happy with things as they were and wanted no part of the "agitators" who were calling for a change. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a phony, they piously declared, and "if you talk with the common folks, as I have, you will know they do not want him stirring up things around here any more than we do."

So there stood Jerry Falwell a few nights ago, his preacher voice all tuned and toned for the occasion, telling us that Bishop Tutu is a phony and that the black people of South Africa don't want U.S. corporations to disinvest or for the U.S. Congress to impose economic sanctions on the country. He had spoken with both the "true leaders" and the

grass roots, he told us and discovered their real feelings on the matter.

Strangely enough, I have no doubts that is exactly what Rev. Jerry heard. You can hear almost anything you want to, if you want to, if you want to had enough.

I remember well the lady in Birmingham in 1963 who reported to me, with absolute sincerity, that the black people of that city were opposed to the campaign of civil disobedience being led by Dr. King that decisive summer. She knew because she had asked her maid, and Tillie had told her so. "Tillie has with us for over 30 years and is treated just like one of the family," she added. Case Closed.

Two mornings later she was watching the morning news on the Today Show. As usual there was a report on Birmingham. Another March for Freedom. Another group of blacks arrested and jailed. It was an all too familiar report. Why were the networks giving so much attention to these "outside agitators," she wondered as she watched.

Then she saw Tillie. Right in the front row of the marchers. Being handcuffed and carried away kicking to a paddy wagon by four of Bull Connor's cops.

In such a situation, as Southern women of that generation were wont to do, the matron took to her bed with a case of "the vapors."

Better keep the smelling salts close at hand, Rev. Falwell. You may be in for a big surprise.

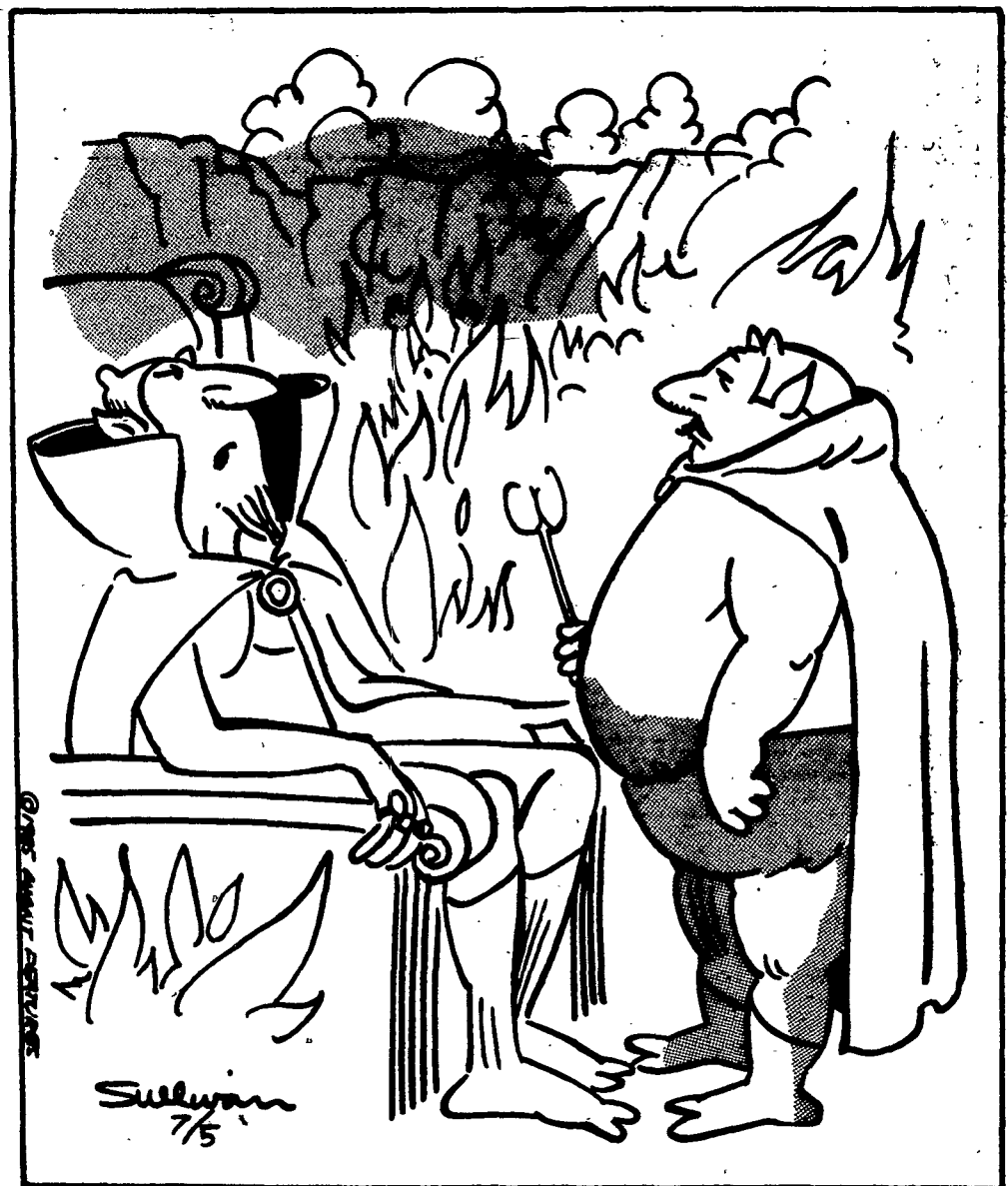
Bethany House sets date for informational meeting

To the Editor:

For those people interested in volunteering at Bethany House, there will be an informational meeting at the house Wednesday, September 11, at 7:30 p.m. Bethany House serves the needs of homeless women and children and is located at 169 St. Bridget's

Drive. This meeting is for both old and new volunteers. Further information may be obtained by calling us at (716)454-4197.

The Bethany House Staff
Elizabeth Bearsto
Marian Carracino
Donna Ecker



"I'M TAKING YOU OFF DESSERT TEMPTATIONS."

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.