

Editorial

Amid the rhetoric, what?

As an editorial statement for this week, the Courier-Journal has no real opinion to offer; instead we present our confusion at the varied reports on Nicaragua that are presented in these pages and those of other media.

On our front page, we report two differing views of conditions in Nicaragua. The returning Witness for Peace delegation asserts that the Sandinista government is on its way to establishing a just system of social democracy and that the United States government should cease intervening in that country's affairs.

Juxtaposed to that report is the conclusion of Humberto Belli, a former Sandinista who considers the Nicaraguan government a repressive, communist state.

The arguments on both sides are palpable. Belli claims that the Sandinistas are progressing slowly toward a "hidden agenda" of communist totalitarianism, that their claim to democratic ideals is merely a ruse. Based on the history of various communist consolidations, that is entirely possible.

On the other hand, President

Daniel Ortega says his government is forced to impose a state of emergency because of the actions of U.S.-supported contra forces. That, too, seems likely. It would be difficult for anyone to sanction civil liberties when one does not know who is conspiring against him.

In the middle of it all is the Church, represented by Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo, which clearly is being repressed, regardless of any government motivations.

In essence, however, the American public is caught in between as well. We are being urged by various speakers to endorse this or that policy, to believe this person and disregard the other. Certainly all speakers believe they are right, yet the rhetoric and ideology propounded by both sides clouds the issue so well that it is nearly impossible to reach an objective perception of the situation.

Therefore, we strongly advise that readers approach discussions of Nicaragua with open minds, but retain a grain of scepticism when analyzing "evidence" presented. We surely intend to do so.

Caucus endorsements point out those who favor abortion funding

To the Editor:

The October 8 Democrat and Chronicle reported that the Rochester Area Women's Political Caucus endorsed candidates for the coming election. In order to get endorsed, candidates had to: 1) support passage of a federal Equal Rights Amendment; 2) support a woman's right to have an abortion; 3) support Medicaid funding for abortions; and 4) agree to support expanded public funding for child care.

Thomas Ryan was endorsed for mayor, and the six council members they (the caucus) endorsed were: John G. Curran, Joan M. Hensler, Ruth H. Scott, Tim O. Mains, Beverly J. Jackson and Jeffrey Pollack. Patricia L. McCarthy was endorsed for county clerk.

The women's caucus overwhelmingly endorsed William Bristol for state Supreme Court, but Judge Raymond E. Cornelius also had the endorsement. Ann Pfeiffer was endorsed for city court judge.

Endorsements for Rochester School Board went to Nancy Padilla and Cathering Spoto.

County legislature endorsements were to Thomas Parker, second district; Edward Merante, third; Irene Gossin, 15th; J.D. Lynne, 17th; William Siegfried, 18th; Nan Johnson, 21st; Kevin Murray, 24th; and Roy E. Hedman, 29th.

Town endorsements went to: James Morris, Brighton town justice; Lina Cottom, Hamlin Town Board; Joyce Holdgate, Hamlin town clerk; Julia Hann, Ogdenville Town Board; Nancy Gunther, Penfield town clerk; Diane Knechtges, Riga Town Board; and Gray Skoog, Sweden supervisor.

To her credit, Jean Carozzi would not agree with the pro-abortion stand, so was not endorsed. John G. Erb did not return the caucus' questionnaire or seek its endorsement, and James Dely did not appear at the caucus' candidates night.

The Women's Political Caucus pointed out to us the names of the candidates who not only support abortion on demand, but who also would have us pay for abortions.

Jeanne D. Sweeney
135 Nob Hill
Rochester

Are letters propaganda?

To the Editor:

Joseph Goebbels, the arch-fascist, Nazi, anti-Semite propagandist, proposed that if you could tell a lie big enough, often enough, even you will begin to believe it. Mr. Milich (Opinion, October 17: "Writer urges protest against U.S. foreign policy") is certainly no fascist, Nazi, anti-Semite, but he seems to have adopted the Goebbels technique. He has told this story enough times on the pages of the Courier-Journal — only the names and dates have been changed to add variety and timeliness — that I'm sure that now even he believes it, and as any good propagandist will tell you, that's half the battle.

I have one question: Did he write this letter before or after President Duarte had the communist rebels abduct his daughter in order to get sympathy — and more bucks — from the fascist American president?

John J. Clark III
RD-1, Box 61
Wayland

Clergy, religious speak about council campaign

The following statement was issued Monday in an early morning press conference by 16 clergy and religious. The statement was written to provoke thought concerning theological issues that have surfaced in this political campaign.

The statement was signed by: the Rev. Richard Carley; the Rev. James Rice; the Rev. Barbara Young; the Rev. William Young; the Rev. Lynn Nelson; Ms. Isabel Morrison; the Rev. Arthur D. Dolch; the Rev. Dan Finch; the Rev. Nancy Crane; the Rev. Paul Brennan; Frances Sweeney, SSJ; Barbara Moore, RSM; the Rev. Phyllis Reed; the Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed; the Rev. Bruce Hanson; and the Rev. Steven C. Law.

It reads: "We the undersigned have gathered to express our concern for the escalating homophobic tone in connection with the city council race. We are rooted in different religious traditions and proceed

from a call to minister to and with God's people. Our denominations include American Baptist, Episcopal United Church of Christ, United Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Unitarian Universalist. We wish to remind the people of Rochester that there is more than one religious and moral viewpoint in our community.

"We have come to believe in and experience a God of love and justice who is filled with compassion and present with all. This understanding of God calls us to live a life of love and justice tempered with compassion as expressed in the biblical challenge to 'love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"We believe in the scriptural affirmation that 'love casts out fear' of those different from ourselves. It is this fear that could distract the Rochester community from the major issues raised in this campaign. Mutual respect and caring should characterize our

And opinions

'Self-seeking' causes critical lack of religious and priestly vocations

To the Editor:

The lack of vocations is being given ever-increasing attention: Why do we not have more applicants to the priesthood and to the religious life? The answer is at once simple and complex. It would also provide insight as to why marriages are in great numbers proving unstable — for the call to marriage is also a holy vocation.

Underlying the poor response to the call from God is the prevailing lack of lived faith in the homes and the watering down of moral teachings in the schools and, sad to say, in many pulpits. All too often the demands of faith are reduced to concerns of this earth, with the concomitant seeking of self and the "easy way." The greatest obstacle to vocations (and to a life of faith) is the obsession with sex, and the disastrous exploitation of that instinct in the schools is a hellish implement destructive of the grace of God in our souls.

The value of self-denial for the sake of the kingdom of God, the inability to understand that even suffering has great value when offered to God in union with the sacrifice of Our Lord, the easy-going manner of life that manifests itself in a lack of respect for authority, the raising of the diabolic banner proclaiming, "I will not serve — that is, no one is going to tell ME what to do or not to do — all of these are in direct opposition to the call of Christ.

Basic to a positive response to the call of Christ is true humility and a strong desire to immolate self for the sake of the heavenly kingdom, together with a strong and active desire to live for God and for God alone. The two great commandments — love of God and love of neighbor and self for love of God

in accordance with His holy will — lead surely to God, and with His help make possible and even easy the necessary lifelong spirit of commitment that sustains the vocation to the priesthood, the religious life, the married state, and even to a holy and celibate life "in the world."

What seems hard for many to grasp is that a holy life brings serenity and peace of soul to the humble and contrite of heart. Self-seeking, on the contrary, interferes with the blessings of Almighty God and produces an emptiness and weariness of soul that lead to a futile searching for happiness through the pursuit of pleasure as a goal in life. Therein lies an undying restlessness that often leads to despair.

The commandments of God are guides for us, all — they provide a map for life that takes us to that peace in this life promised by Christ and, in the next life, to eternal bliss. But when instead of seeking the will of God so that we can strive with all our might to carry it out — with His help — we concentrate on doing our own thing, we will never achieve happiness, either in this life or in the life to come. If, on the other hand, we seek to live for God, then the call that God sends to each of us to that state in life for which we were created, there will be no lack of acceptance of our particular call, but a fulfilling of that call to the end of our life.

God provides the strength to carry out His will for us if we live a prayerful life, while at the same time observing all that He asks of us.

Father Salem Faddoul
St. Nicholas Church
of the Melkite Greek Catholic Rite
Rochester

Doctor explains 'pill' as abortifacient

To the Editor:

In your editorial note of October 24, when speaking of the intrauterine device (IUD) and the birth control pill causing abortions, you said that the IUD did indeed cause an early first-trimester abortion. The birth control pill, however, you stated "rarely causes abortion." This needs some clarification.

The pill in its original high-estrogen dose form was supposed to stop ovulation from occurring and thereby act as a temporary sterilizing agent. This it did in the majority of cases. When ovulation did rarely occur, pregnancy could still be prevented or terminated by one of its two other modes of action, that is, as a barrier to sperm, by making the cervical mucus less hospitable OR as an abortifacient by preventing the implantation of the eight-day old conceptus.

With newer low-dose birth control pills, we are seeing more and more "mini-abortions" occurring since women on the low-dose pill have breakthrough ovulation

more frequently. Obviously, one is not always aware while on the birth control pill whether or not ovulation has taken place during a particular cycle and, therefore, during any cycle, there could be a possibility of having a "mini-abortion."

This fact your readers should be made aware of if they wish to make a truly moral and informed judgment about the birth control pill!

Barbara A. Fredericks, M.D.
432 Magee Ave.
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: We stand corrected. Oversimplification easily results when the layman attempts to explain a complex medical issue, especially when such "advances" as the low-dose pill are involved. We should note, however, that the point of the editor's note was not to dispute the pill's potential to act as an abortifacient, but to point out that, when effective, the IUD is always an abortifacient.

Writer appreciates article on St. Ambrose principal

To the Editor:

After living here in Rochester for nearly 19 years and being a faithful reader of the Courier-Journal, I was most impressed with the Thursday, Oct. 17, full-page article by Teresa A. Parsons on St. Ambrose School's principal, Sister Ann Collins.

Not only did Sister Ann express herself candidly, but the article seemed to me well-done by Ms. Parsons, that is to say, written verbatim with little else to add.

The St. Ambrose family community should be very proud to have Sister Ann as the principal who relates so well to the

600-plus students, plus teachers and parents.

When you read this article, you will probably come away with the workload and responsibility of Sister Ann. It reminds me that she is the CEO (chief executive officer) of a corporation of 600-plus workers, teachers as managers, parents as stockholders, and she, as many corporations, has to come up with a five-year plan for the future.

Again, you have a beautifully written full-page article. Thank you.

Donald C. Shiner
765 Bay St.
Rochester

response to each other in making important public decisions.

"God has given all people certain gifts that can benefit the human family if they have the opportunity to use them. We urge the

Rochester community to evaluate Tim Mains competence for public office solely on the basis of his qualifications and ability to articulate and resolve issues related to the office he seeks."

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.