

Editorial

Giving thanks

This week we commemorate the settling of our great nation and the success of its earliest immigrants. The celebration traditionally centers upon the turkey with all the trimmings, followed by antacids and football on TV. Thanksgiving is a happy time to join with the family in thanking God for many blessings and to enjoy a restful day — unless, of course, you are the cook.

Yet Thanksgiving is also an appropriate time to give thought to what each of us can do to aid those less fortunate. On the front page of this week's edition, you will find the first of four articles on the Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities annual Christmas Fund. Each year, the fund aids the neediest persons living in the Diocese of Rochester. These people are represented by a listing of the "100 Neediest Cases," a brief description of 100 families or

individuals in the diocese who are in extreme need. These descriptions, however, are only representative of the many needy persons living among us.

Contributions to the fund, administered by Catholic Charities, can help. So can more direct involvement — from volunteering at a nursing home, shelter or house of hospitality to taking an angel from the Sharing Trees sponsored by several parishes and civic groups or saying a simple but important prayer for those in need.

While we enjoy the bounty of the Thanksgiving table, let us not forget those who do not have enough to eat or a warm bed in which to rest at the day's end. We urge all of our readers to look around themselves at those less fortunate and to do whatever they can to make their holidays brighter.

More instruction needed on bishop's directive

To the Editor:

As our parish prepares to offer the Eucharist under both forms at Sunday Masses, many of us Catholics are, once again, confused and saddened by the changes which have continued to take place in our Church since Vatican II. Perhaps most difficult to understand and accept are not the changes themselves but the reasons for them and the methods of implementation. Most puzzling is the fact that we will be able to "share more FULLY ??? in the Eucharist!" Who of us ever believed that we received Christ less fully in the form of bread only? A pamphlet on the subject fails to mention why the practice (of receiving under both species) was discontinued centuries ago. Also missing are the guidelines for the proper procedures to be taken in case someone should accidentally spill the Precious Blood.

Bishop Clark, in his role as teacher, issued a letter to all parishes in the diocese with a directive for "no option" implementation of the reception of Holy Communion from the cup. We look forward to more letters from the bishop. Seldom in our history has there

been such a desperate need for official affirmation of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church — with no options.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Although we at the Courier-Journal are certainly no experts on this policy, we can offer the following two pieces of information. First of all, the "no option" directive refers to the celebrants, not the congregation. All parishes are directed to offer the cup at all Masses, but members of the congregation may choose whether they wish to receive under both species or to pass the cup.

Secondly, we recall that Father Paul Cuddy explained in his column of July 17 that the practice of offering the cup was discontinued in the 15th or 16th century for three reasons: to eliminate potential abuse of the Precious Blood as a result of alcoholism; to protect against the danger of spilling the Blood; and to refute a heretical theory that Christ was not present unless both species are present.

Points out activity of euthanasia movement

To the Editor:

The Medicine, Law and Morality program that focused on euthanasia, held at St. Mary's Hospital Nov. 16 (by the Catholic Physicians' Guild), successfully brought together people of many disciplines and opinions to discuss the ethical dilemmas facing families and health professionals today.

If there was a note of consensus to carry away from the meeting, I would conclude that it was to encourage decisions regarding discontinuation of treatment in difficult cases to be handled on an individual-patient basis, taking into consideration all facets of the individual's case.

The discussion did not specifically explore the effect promoters of the euthanasia movement — Society for the Right to Die, Concern for the Dying, the Hemlock Society — have made through their promotion of the Living Will, "death with dignity" legislation and judicial decisions.

Formerly, in their approach to the public, the euthanasia societies' objective seemed to be to give the individual the option of refusing obviously extraordinary care in the event of a terminal illness. That objective now seems to have shifted from removing unwanted extraordinary and heroic measures

to legally facilitating the removal of customary care.

I would like to call attention to three things that indicate this shift, which could inevitably interfere with health care delivery based on the patients' individual needs:

1. the 1984 revised Living Will, which now appears to be structured as a legal document and which contains a list of "treatment" choices to refuse, including feeding and hydration;

2. the August 8, 1985 endorsement by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws of a model statute, "Rights of the Terminally Ill Act," which encourages a uniform law in every state legalizing the Living Will and the withdrawal of all forms of artificial hydration and nutrition, including spoon feeding, from persons designated as being in a broadly defined "terminal condition;" and

3. the New Jersey Claire Conroy case and now the New Jersey Nancy Ellen Jobs case, in which the patients were not terminally ill, involving petitions by their next of kin to the courts to judge that stopping artificial feeding is proper under the law.

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A change of heart on need for sisters to wear habits

To the Editor:

Regarding the letter of November 7 ("Writer says habitless nuns can't set good examples): At one time, I thought the nuns should go back to wearing the habit, but since then I have discovered that the women I know who are from the different religious orders are none the less religious because of their dress.

In my parish, we have a dedicated Sister of Mercy (Sister M. deChantal) who is a constant excellent example to us despite the fact that she does not wear a habit. I have met with other women who are members of religious orders and find them well aware of their religious affiliation and commitment.

Should they go back to the habit and go back to living in the institutions which kept them away from knowing how much it cost to pay for the gasoline in a car, to buy food at Wegmans, or the many other things we all face each day?

I hope not. I hope they will continue to enrich our lives with their devotion to their religious orders and their service to all of us.

What you wear doesn't tell me what you are. Your actions and your treatment of your sisters and brothers tell me what you are!

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And opinions

Writer commends objective reporting of news as means toward debate on moral questions

To the Editor:

Please add my voice to those supporting your editorial of October 31 ("Amid the rhetoric, what?") and your commitment to objective reporting. Your efforts to reflect all viewpoints that are neither libelous nor in poor taste prove to me that good reporting stimulates debate rather than contains it. If the search for truth is indeed paramount, no difference of opinion may destroy the truth. A healthy political process will correct any distortion resulting from excessive rhetoric or emotion. The responsible press recognizes that in a democracy people form opinions through access to a free press and, therefore, that people tend to make better judgments regarding what actions may be best taken according to conscience — rather than to conform to public opinion.

In the Nov. 14 letter "Editorial advice is good; be skeptical of 'evidence'" G.F. Newberry discussed the use of nationalism by revolutionaries in Nicaragua — whether they be Marxist, communist or other in their orientations.

In 1941, Hilaire Belloc observed that "the intense nationalism that is characteristic of many countries today has all the marks of a religion. Not of a full religion in the sense of a creed accompanied by a ritual and a developed ethical doctrine; but of a religion in the aesthetic sense: in the sense of that which in a religion exalts the emotions, prompts to sacrifice, ensures enthusiastic support: of a religion in the sense of devotion to an object of worship — worship passionate to the point of men's sacrificing all they have, all else they love, and life itself, without question, to the thing adored."

He further stated: "In this it is that conflict exists potentially always and everywhere, between Nationalism and the Catholic Church."

To understand Nicaragua, we can look at nationalism as one of many forces in the world that opposes true religion. Belloc summarized the dilemma he perceived the Church faces: "For there is no room for two religions in any man's mind. Of any two loyalties one must take precedence over the other. And religion — that is, the recognition of the ultimate reality, the adoration of that for which everything else must be sacrificed — is a mood of affection such that it will bear no equal rival."

This analysis is described by the history of the Jewish people in the second Book of Maccabees, chapter six. Their trial foreshadowed our own.

Among the problems Catholics face is that our loyalty to the See of Rome, established by Jesus through Peter, is frequently questioned or challenged. To stand the test of time as the early Christians did, we of the Roman Catholic tradition seek to be universal in our worship of God, turning in faith to ask the trine God to show us the way to grow according to His plan for us, regardless of all national claims against us.

Patriotism should not dominate conscience. For a Christian, loyalty to an earthly power is no substitute for religious freedom. Christ taught this to all His chosen apostles, including Judas Iscariot. The lesson is more valuable today than it was two millennia ago.

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Another way to 'skin a cat' in court ruling?

To the Editor:

I found myself empathizing with the letter of John Clark of Wayland (Opinion, Oct. 31: "Are letters propaganda?"). I am not accusing anyone of lying, but rather note that there is a similarity between Dr. Goebbels' one-sided propaganda and our own.

Right and wrong are both one-sided. But our consciences, by which we decide these issues are multi-dimensional. Because we fail to deal with this multi-dimensional factor, we fail in our efforts to rouse the public conscience. And, therefore, we fail to preach God's gospel.

I found the article — concerning the struggle of the Catholic schools in light of court rulings on remedial reading by Catholic schools ("Catholic schools struggle to comply with court ruling," Oct. 31) — very illustrative of how our message is lost because, like Dr. Goebbels, we are so one-sided. Every time that we allow the struggle to be restricted to religion vs. secularism we take our lumps. Each defeat strengthens the case for secularism. In the agony of our common Gethsemane, we fail to resort to the solace of prayer which would give us the serenity to think out loud, discussing our problem with God. Maybe He is giving us a message. Maybe He is telling us "there are other ways to skin a cat."

In this constant struggle of we "too good to be true" defenders of God's will vs. a goddess society, we forget those who are caught in the middle of this power struggle. We forget just who those poor people are. In our efforts to do for them, we never look at what we do to them. And in this case, our failure is depriving children of a chance at an education they cannot get because they need a special education.

Who are these children who need remedial instruction? Because the special programs for them are authorized for "poor" areas, we restrict our thinking to the fact that they are poor. We find no mention of poor under any civil rights laws or in the Bill of Rights. But we certainly find separation of Church and State to ensure religious freedom.

Are there no other ways to think of these

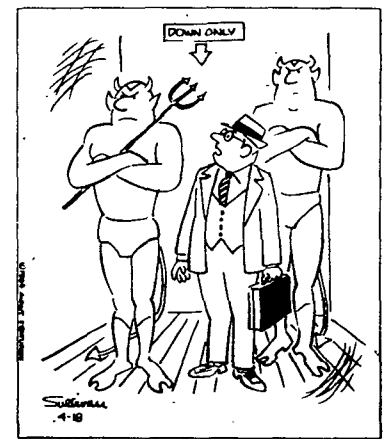
children? What type of person needs remedial reading and remedial math instruction? Is residence in a poor neighborhood the reason they need this special help?

Isn't it time we remember that we are talking about people with learning disabilities? Isn't it time to remember that a learning disability is just that, a disability?

There is a special law concerning disability. It has been around for 12 years. It is called the Rehabilitation Law. Every unit of local government receiving federal monies is subject to federal regulations which remain unenforceable due to lack of concern by everyday God-loving people. Has your local government conducted a self-evaluation of compliance with the handicap regulations? Has it invited comment from "interested individuals including handicapped individuals and organizations representing them"? Don't we qualify as interested individuals?

The only reference to this was made by Justice Burger. He briefly cited "dyslexia." It is obvious this was ignored by Church lawyers! Since this was a 5-4 decision, all that was needed was a factor that could have swung one more vote. Let's be multi-dimensional!

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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.