

Editorial

The year in review

It has been an interesting year — or, at least, three-quarters of one — for the once-new staff of the Courier-Journal. In preparing this "Year in Review" issue, we've spend a great deal of time looking through the issues we have published in these nine months. It's interesting to see how the paper has changed and how much we've grown — in our knowledge of diocesan affairs and in defining for ourselves the type of newspaper we want the Courier-Journal to be.

We've been tinkering with design and content for some time, and finally feel we've reached an even keel. Now, instead of redesigning the wheel, we'll be able to devote our efforts toward improving its gearing.

Starting next week, for example, our new youth page, *Echo*, will debut. In response to the requests of many readers, we promised last

spring to reinstate a youth page like the old Raparound. We had a lot of work to do — getting organized and completing our staff — before we could commit to such an undertaking. But, as we said then, youth coverage was one of our top priorities, one we would get to as soon as we were able. We're very happy that day has come.

We're also working to develop consistent reporting of elementary school news and hope eventually to reach out to Catholic children who are not enrolled in Catholic schools.

These are just two of our goals for 1986. If you have ideas for improving the Courier-Journal, give us a call so we can talk about them. This is your newspaper, and in order for us to make it interesting to you, we need your input.

And, from all of us, a belated Happy New Year!

System's values obscure awareness of injustice

To the Editor:

In his letter of December 12, Mr. John Starkweather finds himself astounded that the bishops in their economics pastoral should raise our awareness about perceived shortcomings in the U.S. capitalist system. In turn, find myself astonished (Isn't that a beautiful word? Webster says it means "to stun with bewildered wonder!") by Mr. Starkweather's thought that "When middle- and upper-class people find out that they are expected to unquestioningly support the unproductive poor through the expensive mechanism of inflated bureaucracy, rebellion will grow."

I tend to doubt the seeming implication that the bishops are holding out for "the expensive mechanisms of inflated bureaucracy." However, in the first part of the sentence, about the expected support of the poor, I can readily see that Mr. Starkweather has been influenced by one of those "radical priests." His name is Jesus.

Mr. Starkweather admires the relative perfection of what he calls the "democratic capitalism of the U.S." It seems to me that any system needs to be evaluated on its ability to facilitate our becoming fully

human and fully Christ.

As I think about our system, I find a number of questions coming to mind. I ask myself, for example, if the system does not make it *more difficult* for a capitalist achiever to acknowledge that all ultimately is a gift of a loving Father, unmerited, unearned?

And, without putting down the right to private property in any way, does not our system tend to block out our awareness that none of us has absolute ownership of anything? Do not the values of the system tend to obscure rather than foster clear awareness that we are all part of each other? That we are one body and that our individual surplus *may belong by right* to those whose basic needs are unmet?

The scriptures suggest that poverty is caused by injustice, by oppression and greed. To some of us it seems that our system condones these conditions in far too many instances and may even foster them. This is what I hear the bishops calling our attention to in their pastoral on economics.

James G. Connor
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Discussion illuminates God's creative ability

To the Editor:

I was in a bar the other night and overheard the following conversation that I found fascinating. I thought that it might be of some interest to your readers.

A man and a woman were talking, and I heard him ask her if she understood how God could have made the world out of nothing. She answered, "Well, there are three possibilities. The fundamentalists would have us believe that in six days God created the world out of nothing just like that. Then, there is the realization that God also transforms — that is, creatively new elements are added to pre-existing matter and something similar yet different results. A third possibility is that God continually creates and that His original act of six days continues still and has never stopped. The first cause has not stopped yet. God's creative act, to use the words of Teilhard de Chardin, "... is an act coexistent with the whole duration of the universe."

The man sounded a little incredulous as he asked, "You mean that God started creating and hasn't stopped yet?"

She replied firmly, "I mean more than that. I mean that God is creating; creativity is

the same thing as God. God is not a person. God is a process. We are part of that process. Creativity is godliness, and whatever is not creative but rather stagnating and destructive is sin."

"It reminds me," he said, "of the 60s cliché, 'If you're not a part of the solution, you're a part of the problem.'"

"Exactly," she said. "To love God is to be creative. To love God is to be building up this world, working for its completion, its fulfillment, when Christ can return triumphant!"

"Ya know," he said, "You have a way of taking some pretty dry concepts and getting me excited about them."

It was dark in the bar, but I believed that if there had been more light, I would have seen her blushing.

I went up to her later in the evening, and congratulated her on her discussion with this man, and she said, "Thank you, and I didn't even get a chance to share with him my belief that God is a woman."

David G. Markham
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Conflicting voices confuse authentic Church teaching

To the Editor:

With so many conflicting voices in the Church today, it is difficult to know what is authentic Church teaching and what is not.

There are those who tell us that if we are to be good Catholics, we must change with the times; that many things that were important before Vatican II are no longer important. But the sad fact is that many false changes and abuses have crept in to the Church in the name of Vatican II. Many beautiful and time-honored devotions certainly pleasing to God were abandoned in an over-zealous desire for updating.

So, what are we to do? Trants and Logos carry the book on the documents of Vatican II for those who really want to know. Also, we can be safe in listening to the Holy Father. It is a certainty that he will not lead us astray, and for the most complete and accurate information on what the Vicar of Christ is saying, tune in to Monsignor Joseph Cirrincione's nightly "Family Rosary for Peace" on WWWW radio, 1500 on the AM dial.

Arlene O'Connor
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And opinions

EDITOR'S NOTE: Below are letters from rivals John E. Milich and John J. Clark III. We hope this is the end of their sparring match, and that in further correspondence they will discuss only the issues and refrain from comments about each other.

Milich attempts to clarify 'mischaracterization' of correspondence with ideological opponent

To the Editor:

John J. Clark III seriously mischaracterized me in his letter to the Courier-Journal of December 5. Clark's contention that I wrote him about "seeing you on the printed pages of the Courier-Journal" in the "polite note" I mentioned in my November 21 letter is absolutely false. Beginning his letter with this falsehood serves to ultimately mislead the reader, because it sets the tone for further misrepresentation of myself as a communist (portraying U.S. government critics as lying schemers, capable of any variety of underhanded evil).

In actuality, I am a libertarian-socialist, Christian (I try), and a protector, defender and extender of the American Revolution of 1776. Above all, I am committed to searching for truth and promoting informed discussion. Mr. Clark presents me as a provocative propagandist in the worst sense.

My initial note to him (5/5/85) said the following: "Dear Mr. Clark, Your letter to the Courier-Journal this week is very interesting. Could you tell me where you got that quote from Lenin? Thank you so much for your reply. Yours truly, John F. Milich." I think that's fairly polite.

This note referred to some sentiments Clark attributed to Lenin, the Russian revolutionary, in a letter to the Courier-Journal (5/1/85). I have studied Lenin somewhat, and was genuinely curious about the source of this statement. It seemed out of character for Vladimir Lenin, but I really had no reason to doubt Mr. Clark.

I did write, "... So, you and I, Mr. Clark, have nothing to say to each other. I will see you on the printed pages of the Courier-Journal" in a letter to Clark (5/14/85), responding not only to his inability to

provide a source for the alleged quote from Lenin, but also to comments expressed by Clark in his 5/7/85 response to my original inquiry.

Realizing that any further correspondence between Mr. Clark and me would be futile without public evaluation, I resolved to research the source for the quote on my own, and if necessary, debate Mr. Clark about that and other issues on your Opinion page.

It should also be made clear that while Mr. Clark did name his source for the "Lenin quote" of his December 5 letter, it was not Lenin but somebody named Fred Schwarz.

But, while Fred Schwarz and his book don't show up anywhere in Ithaca's excellent library system, I have discovered one of the primary sources of false Leninism. Besides the Nazi Goebbels' "translations" of Lenin, the October 8 New York Times reports that the John Birch Society's "Blue Book" provides similar, homegrown slanders of a man I now consider to be one of history's all-time heroes, a revolutionary who brought dignity (besides food and decent shelter) to the mass of Russians — even if his movement was stolen and distorted by Stalin, Hitler, Reagan and the Birchers.

Finally, no I don't think Mr. Clark knew all about false Leninism when he wrote in May. I believe he thought his information was accurate. While I cannot know the same concerning his mischaracterization of me in his latest letter, I am not angry with him. Life is too short, and Christ teaches us to forgive seven times 70.

Thank you for allowing me the space to explain this matter.

John E. Milich
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Ongoing exchange of letters is single example of war between haves/have-nots, Clark says

To the Editor:

As we used to say in the Army: Your editor's note (C-J, December 5) is received and understood. However, I would like to clear up one misconception. What is going on between Mr. Milich and myself is not, repeat not, a debate (and we are not alone — your pages are full of the news of the "fighting," although it is called by other names to confuse the issues.) It is an ideological conflict (at present it is a peaceful confrontation, but at other times, millions have paid with their lives because they did not understand the issues of the consequences of their actions.)

It started at Runnymede with the Magna Carta, progressed through the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the American Civil War, the Russian Revolution, China, Korea, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Cuba. The proletarian take-over of the U.S. under FDR, JFK and LBJ and the retaking of America by the aristocracy under Ronald Reagan is closer to home. Today, the conflict is rampant in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia and Nicaragua, and in the Christian churches (including the American Catholic). Mr. Milich and I are but two small voices crying in the wilderness, trying to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Inside the Catholic Church, there is a dispute in progress between Cardinal Ratzinger and Bishop Malone. I quote from an article (C-J December 5) "The synod is not a boxing match between the two," said Cardinal Krol. "The two people are expressing judgments based on experiences," he said. "I don't expect the synod will canonize Cardinal Ratzinger or Bishop Malone. We

don't make sinners either," said Cardinal Danneels. Both cardinals said the question is not one of who is right, but what are the facts. "The aim of the synod is a realistic interpretation of the world, beginning with objective truth," said Cardinal Krol. Reading all the council's documents is more important than trying to discover a "spirit of the Council" or reading a few paragraphs out of context.

These are my sentiments exactly on the East-West confrontation, the war between the haves and the have-nots, and the dispute over the meaning of Vatican II. One new school erected as a show place in Nicaragua does not atone for 70 years of proletarian tyranny, anymore than does a generous contribution to a church fund drive excuse fraud and deceit in business dealings.

The American Revolution followed quickly by the French Revolution and Vatican II destroyed for a time the concept of Rule by Divine Right. Now Cardinal Krol says: "The bishop who rules his diocese rules, not as a delegate or as a vicar of the Pope, but by divine authority." Can you imagine the consternation in the liberal community and the other Christian church groups if they find out the Catholic Church is preaching that the Catholic Church's authority comes from God and not from the taxpayers or the parishioners; that the Catholic Church has gone back to its old ways.

Thank you for listening. I promise, no more name calling (if I can help it).

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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.