

C-J Opinions

Writer accepts criticism of his letter's style, reiterates scriptural foundation of argument

To the Editor:

Ms. Conheady's well-written letter (Opinion, Feb. 27: "Writer decries convoluted nature of argument") critiquing the style of my own "fortified labyrinthine" effort, I took as somewhat of a tribute, even though my eyebrows got singed. It seems I left no openings to assail. But I wish she had brought to light one positive, biblical, theological warrant for a female priesthood.

Perhaps some kind of "warrant" is expected to ensue from joining in simplistic and, to my mind, corrosive blanket accusations of a "scandal" for not trashing covenant relationship and making its prophetic office "more evenly distributed."

Some cannot so gingerly skip over a seeming lack of biblical theological foundation. Ignored was my contention that this "lack" on the part of the Founder is behind the absence of female priesthood, making it pointless to "wag the finger" at the hierarchy as if the created order and revelation indeed are not God's own doing.

Ms. Conheady correctly notes that I do not say that God is a male, but concludes that I fail to do so because I guardingly hide in embarrassment. Considering the weight of scripture, one need not hide. One might hide vaunting, as some feminists have, a female deity in contradistinction to scripture that signifies biologically an encompassing being, pantheistically celebrating the cosmos as god.

One might blush over an "evenly distributed" inclusive god-goddess, truly anthropomorphic, that reflects us, not the Divinity. One might withdraw from the still-to-be-unraveled conception of the un-

cola generation: the ungendered android, uncommitted to the transmission of life, the sexless "non-creator" that also reflects us, not the Divinity. But in truth, it is not necessary to say God is a male in order to be able to say that Yahweh, *He is*, identified certain attributes of His Being with maleness.

Theologians tell us God is not simply existence or "being" per se, but a Being with identifiable attributes. There is more to gender than just physical generation. There is also the spiritual element: identity and self-revelation. His Being was revealed in deeds done under male signs and guarded by covenant order, one being **male priesthood**.

This identity is relational, not corporeal. I don't know if this makes God male, but what more convincing a language could a loving Creator speak to reveal His identity than the language He created to speak love: procreation itself?

Exodus records a clash with uncompassing male symbols: male priesthood, serpents, rods, outstretched arms, hands ("yad" can also mean manhood), and the "visitation" sign of pillar of fire and of smoke, and a prophetic relationship into which a spiritual "seed" truly was planted to blossom into the Christ; God birthing Himself into the midst of us!

I merely wish that well-meaning lay people and staffs, at least in our diocese, would remain faithful to our heritage and support and follow established directives.

To serve men and women best is to serve God first.

Gene Charles
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Canandaigua

Intercongregational Council questions effect of using violence to resolve conflict in Libya

To the Editor:

We deplore the reality of recent world violence, whether carried out by extremist groups or government forces. The military action of April 14 against Libya by the United States has been justified by government officials as self-defense. We must ask the question: Where is the point beyond which our efforts to defend ourselves destroy the very values that make up our "self"? We also ask, why do we so often use killing to show that killing is wrong? Why do we resort to violence as a means of condemning violence?

The present course of United States policy seems likely to add to world violence rather than to reduce it. Escalation of military actions seems extremely likely, and has indeed been threatened. How will any restraint be possible with such great anger on the part of individuals and nations, driving them to encourage and use ever-greater force? Sadly, armed intervention deals only with symptoms, not causes of unrest; war making has created many more ills than it has ever solved.

So much of the world's resources, efforts and training are used to develop fighting capability. Very little in contrast is devoted to develop and practice the skills of conflict resolution by peaceful means. Our present

administration has shown very little willingness to undertake serious negotiations regarding a number of conflicts around the world, preferring to use threatening rhetoric and actual force instead. In the case of Libya, the administration has claimed conclusive evidence of Libya's role in the violence in Germany. The proper use of such evidence is in court, not in retaliation. However, the administration has effectively barred the United States from using the World Court on its own behalf.

We call on our government and our people to seek greater restraint and more effective means of dealing with violence. One means would be to use the United Nations as a forum for authentic negotiations. We urge our leaders to reconsider their policy, and we ask other citizens to join us in writing and calling their governmental officials in order to express their views.

The Intercongregational
Council of Rochester:
Sister Jean Marie Kearse, superior general,
and the congregational councilors
of the Sisters of Mercy;
Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, superior
general, and the congregational councilors
of the Sisters of St. Joseph;
Sister Muriel Curran, SSND,
diocesan vicar for religious

Commends Courier reporter for articles on transplants

To the Editor:

Please take pride in the professional and sensitive reporting of one of your journalists. Teresa A. Parsons of the Courier-Journal staff not only furthered our fund-raising efforts for the Richard Weaver Transplant Fund, but also captured the essence of our community work with her subsequent article on organ donation. Teresa and the Courier-Journal are to be commended for being one of the few publications to recognize the importance and immediacy of the

organ-donor issue.

Richard Weaver of St. Mary's Parish in Auburn received the transplanted heart of a 24-year-old Bronx man on Feb. 18 at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. Our fund-raising efforts for Mr. Weaver and his family have topped the \$50,000 mark. Thank you for being part of Richard's success story.

Melina Carnicelli
fund-raising chairwoman
St. Mary's Church
Auburn

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 1 1/2 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.

Doctor says 'individuation' purely philosophic

To the Editor:

As a lay person with a medical background within the Roman Catholic Church, I find it imperative to address individuation in reference to abortion. The point of individuation has recently been described as occurring between 14 and 21 days of gestation.

Individuation is defined as the time when a newly formed human being becomes an individual. When individuation takes place is purely an individual's philosophical point of view based on the physical properties of the human intra- or extrauterine child. In the medical profession, it is not uncommon to find a variety of "opinions" as to when individuation takes place. The embryologist states emphatically that it occurs at fertilization; the cardiologist says it's when the first heart beat occurs; the neurologist feels that it must be at the time of the first recordable brain wave; the abortionist says at viability; and a famed Nobel prize winner goes so far as to say that individuation occurs two days after birth! Obviously, many learned people place individuation at a different developmental time in the child's life, and they do this not for theological reasons, but for purely physical ones.

What the Church is concerned about and what the moral theologian ought to be questioning is not when individuation takes place but rather when does ensoulment occur

(i.e., when does God see fit to place within the human part of Himself, His Spirit, the immortal soul?) The spiritual dimension is spoken of in the following relevant scriptures: Job 10: 8-12; Isaiah 49: 1,5; Psalms 139: 13-16; and Jeremiah 1:5, which states: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

If the Old Testament words of God are not enough proof of the sanctity of the newly conceived child, a time-proven ethical principle would then come into play and this states that when dealing with uncertain moral, ethical and medical issues, the course of action one decides upon must first and foremost be **do no harm**. So if a new human being is formed at fertilization and only God knows with certainty when His Spirit is in that child, we would have to give all intrauterine children from the moment of fertilization onward the benefit of the doubt and consider them ensouled and therefore sacred in God's eyes. Abortion therefore would be the taking of a life made sacred by God's Spirit and would therefore be a grievous sin against God and man.

Barbara A. Fredericks M.D.
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Finds fault with writer's use of scriptural quotation

To the Editor:

Walter O'Hagan, in his letter in the April 10 Courier-Journal (Opinion: "Injustice greater sin than sexual misconduct") asks, "How great an importance did Christ attach to sexual sins?" He proceeds to answer the question by quoting "one of the most beautiful passages of the Bible, that of the adulteress brought before Jesus by the Pharisees. Jesus' wisdom and compassion are manifest in His statement, 'He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.'" O'Hagan finishes the quote with Jesus' statement, "Neither will I condemn you", and cites the passage as John 8:7-11. By so doing, O'Hagan has committed either an

error of omission or an act of deception, because he fails to complete Jesus' full statement, "You may go. But from now on, avoid this sin."

Attempts to persuade the faithful by the "cut and paste" method of quoting scripture are at best misguided and at worst deceptive. The answer to the question is clearly that Christ attached great importance to this sin. Jesus does not condone sexual sin. Rather, He commands us to avoid these sins and forgives us when we humbly ask for His pardon.

David Tuschel
Elmtree Raod
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On the Right Side Father Paul J. Cuddy

A devotion rises

With the coming May and its devotions in honor of Mary — the living rosary, May shrines and devotions in schools and CCD classes — we might ponder what has been the fate of the rosary.

Years ago when he was assistant pastor at Immaculate Conception Church in Ithaca, Father David Gramke gave me my first book of Karl Rahner. This was just after Vatican II, when there was a certain hysteria to get rid of much-loved devotions like the rosary, Benediction, novenas, litanies, and devotions to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady and the saints. The theory was, "Let's get back to pristine Christianity. Get rid of these lately come devotions."

Karl Rahner commented that the rosary may not be profitable for everyone, though it was to him. "Just because a devotion or practice was not in the early Church does not mean it is 'sectarian,'" he added. "After all, Christ was used to send the Holy Spirit to the Church, and it is through the Holy Spirit that these devotions developed."

Oftentimes, there pops up an objection to the rosary as being "too repetitious, useless." In an article on the rosary in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Father Thurston, SJ, wrote: "The objection so often made against the rosary's 'vain repetitions' is felt by none but those who have failed to realize how entirely the spirit of the exercise lies in the meditation on the fundamental mysteries of our faith. To the initiated, the words of the angelic salutation form only a sort of half-conscious accompaniment; a *bourdon* which we might liken to the 'Holy, Holy, Holy' of the heavenly choirs."

Father Thurston compared the Aves to a "bourdon." I had to look up what a bourdon is. It is an organ stop that is so deep, it is an octave below written pitch, and serves as a kind of guide and control

to the musical sections of a composition. So the repeated prayers are likened to the bourdon, guiding and controlling the theme of each decade.

Years ago, I wrote an article on the rosary in this column, and used the above quotation by Father Thurston, with the figure of speech about the bourdon. How startled I was to find that the printer had printed "bourbon" instead of bourdon! I wondered if some readers concluded that there was some mysterious jollity about the rosary they had not realized.

The repetitive Aves, with the Pater Noster and Gloria signalling the change of theme, is a bit like humming. Even if we don't greatly advert to the words at times, the melody flows on to the glory of God and Our Lady. It seems to parallel Bing Crosby's "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral," which he sang to the ailing pastor, Barry Fitzgerald, in "Going My Way." The "too-ra-loo-ra" is not translatable in words, but it is understood by the heart.

The rosary has regained some honor after its underminings by post-Vatican II iconoclasts. Father Cirrincione's Rosary for Peace continues to have a devoted radio congregation. Several parishes have the rosary before or after daily Mass. It is returning to some of the wake services. Lourdes and Fatima remain holy reminders of Our Lady's wish for the rosary.

Mrs. Rose Forjone Leisenring of Sodus is deeply involved in religious education at Epiphany, Sodus, and St. Rose's, Sodus Point. She phoned me last week. "Can you get us 150 copies of the triptic folder on 'How to Say the Rosary,' with the colorful pictures of each of the 15 mysteries of the rosary?"

Remarkably, I had the complete order in stock, and sent them to Sodus. The pastor is Auburnian Father John Dillon, who is a great-nephew of the late Father Curtin of Clyde. The uncle was a strong advocate for Eucharistic and Marian devotions. He must be smiling on his nephew.