

## C-J Opinions

### Diocesan office offers bishops' statements

#### To the Editor:

In reply to the March 20th letter (Opinion: "Bishops should devote work to constructing foundation") in which the writer said, "I wait for a strong pro-life statement from them (the U.S. Catholic Bishops)," the diocesan Department of Justice and Peace would be happy to send to the writer a copy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation," which was approved in November, 1985. The first "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" was approved by the bishops in 1975. This revised document, drafted by the NCCB's Committee for Pro-Life Activities, "represents a strong reaffirmation of the bishops' commitment to restore protection to the unborn within the context of the consistent ethic of life."

The plan states: "Because victims of abortion are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family, it is imperative that we, as Christians called to serve the least among us, give urgent attention and priority to this issue of

justice." Certainly this is a strong pro-life statement. The plan also states: "In addressing a specific issue — whether it be abortion, nuclear war, capital punishment, degrading poverty or racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination — the church highlights a particular aspect of the Christian message, without forgetting its place within a larger moral framework. Taken together, the church's diverse pastoral statements and practical programs constitute no mere assortment of unrelated initiatives but a consistent strategy in support of human life in its various stages and circumstances."

It is our hope that the writer from Caledonia as well as anyone else interested in obtaining a copy of the bishops' Pro-Life Plan, contact our office at 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y., 14624, or (716)328-3210.

**Mary L. Heidkamp**  
Associate Director of Justice and Peace  
Division of Social Ministry  
Diocese of Rochester

### Writer questions logic, facts of two letters on U.S. policy

#### To the Editor:

Two letters to the Courier-Journal on March 13 invite a response, as their logic and facts are questionable.

The first letter, "Sisters of Mercy urge support for U.S. test ban," is not really logical, as the Soviets are currently and routinely violating arms agreements they've already signed.

In addition, the Soviets are pursuing a policy of genocide and repression in Afghanistan, Poland, Africa and Central America.

Regarding Central America, Lieve Seeger Demeyere, in the letter "Disputes 'facts' cited by contra supporter," ignores the fact that the Soviets have been pouring millions

of dollars in military aid into Nicaragua.

Their ideological surrogates, the Sandinistas, are using this aid to stop the contras and export their Marxist revolution throughout Central America.

Congress, in its shortsighted way, fails to realize that money saved now by denying the contras military aid will be spent a hundred-fold later on, when countries like Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica are under attack by the Sandinistas. Communism can never be stopped unless we are serious about helping anti-communist forces.

Vietnam should have told us that.

**Robert Bart**  
Ithaca

### Books can help teens find meaning of rite

#### To the Editor:

How wonderful to read (in the April 17 Courier-Journal) of the enthusiasm and interest among Spencerport youth! I hope that they remain curious enough to investigate the concept they have been taught that confirmation makes them adult members of the Church.

If they begin with the *Rite of Confirmation*, study edition, published by the U.S. Catholic Conference (and usually available at Trant's), they can discover for themselves in the *Apostolic Constitution* the essence of the sacrament, and see how this is reflected in the rite.

The concept of initiation is there, but will they find much about "adulthood" or even "commitment"? They will find mention of a parallel with natural life, but is it a parallel with life stages? They may find that com-

mitment is overshadowed by gift. Does anyone in the diocese realize that children in danger of death should be confirmed? How much that has been introduced into pre-confirmation study pertains to the sacrament.

Even after the gift is given, we still must continue to learn to cooperate with the Spirit. Parents can still be helpful. So, then, what is the particular purpose of the gift in confirmation? See paragraph 8 of the *Apostolic Constitution* by Pope Paul VI.

Young people wanting to mature in the faith and in their exercise of it cannot afford to confuse the meat with the gravy, and they must be aware of the problem of oversimplifying.

**Judy Echaniz**  
Barrington Street  
Rochester

### Writer says experience is sometimes the worst teacher

#### To the Editor:

Allow me to dissent from the assertion that the practices of artificial contraception, premarital sex and masturbation usually comprise weaknesses of the flesh which may be compromised. From my experience, chastity is quite possible, firstly through knowledge of what it encompasses; secondly by using the means Christ puts at our disposal to purify us, i.e., sacramental confession and the Eucharist; and thirdly by the desire to live chastely.

Without these helps, one's prospects for achieving this virtue are dim. Though sins of the flesh are often classified as sins of weakness, quite often they signify the opposite: a rebellious and strong mind which is offended by the suggestion of controlling one's sexual drive. Chastity need not be compromised because it is available to those who truly seek it.

It seems apparent that one of the fruits of

artificial contraception has been the necessity to continually stimulate our sexual appetite through provocative dress and constant representation of the sexual act in the media. Thereby motivation need not be lacking for the recurring sexual fix which sterile sex invites. However, did the thousands of generations before us achieve integration and psychological wholeness with so little exposure?

As to the suggestion that those who accept Church teachings on sexuality feel betrayed that they (these teachings) "were never defined as infallible," it is irksome. Had Adam and Eve cousins who ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil instead, would Adam and Eve have felt betrayed at having been denied the experience? Sometimes experience is the worst teacher.

**Helen Ann Wagner**  
Ridgeway Avenue  
Rochester

### Native Americans applaud appointment of new bishop

#### To the Editor:

It was with joy that the Catholic Native Americans of this country received the news that they have been given a bishop of their own culture. He is Blessed Sacrament Father Donald E. Pelotte, age 41. Over the years, he has been visible to his people, giving them support. Born and raised in poverty in Maine of the Abenacki tribe, he will understand his fellow Native Americans in the poverty-ridden area where he will be headquartered in Gallup, New Mexico.

Father Pelotte says, "My community is dedicated to the Eucharist, and our rule of life challenges us to work for justice and to

place ourselves at the service of the poor and marginalized."

The faithful wishing to undergird his ministry with prayer and love are invited to send congratulations and spiritual bouquets — rosaries, prayers, Mass intentions, etc. His ordination is set for May 6. Intentions may be sent to: Most Rev. Donald E. Pelotte, SSS; Coadjutor Bishop of Gallup; 711 South Puerco Drive; Box 1338; Gallup, New Mexico 87301.

**Anne M. Scheuerman**  
Harper Drive  
Pittsford

### CHD national office thanks diocese for help

#### To the Editor:

I wish to thank the people of the Diocese of Rochester for their continuing and generous support of the Campaign for Human Development. A check for \$76,623 has been received here at the national office. This amount is the three-quarters portion to be distributed nationally to self-help projects controlled by the poor themselves and designed to remove the causes of poverty.

By this continued support, the people of your diocese are helping to fulfill the wish expressed in the Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, stated in the section entitled The Church's Mission in the World:

"Affirmed instead is a missionary openness for the integral salvation of the world. Through this, all truly human values not only are accepted but energetically defended; the dignity of the human person; fundamental human rights; peace; freedom from

oppression, poverty and injustice. But integral salvation is obtained only if these human realities are purified and further elevated through grace to human familiarity with God, through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

CHD provides an opportunity for us in the spirit of Vatican Council II to claim as our own the joys, hopes, griefs and anxieties of people of our age, especially those who are poor. It allows us to do this in the image of Jesus who gave of His own power that all might experience human dignity.

On behalf of the entire CHD family, I express sincere thanks also to Bishop Matthew H. Clark and to Ms. Mary Heidkamp, your diocesan director.

**Father Alfred LoPinto**  
Executive Director  
Campaign for Human Development  
Washington, D.C.

### Legislation of morality needed to save unborn

#### To the Editor:

Arthur Michelini's letter (Opinion, Feb. 27: "It's not government's role to legislate morality") is replete with oxymorons. There is no "peaceful means possible" to abort the unborn — see "The Silent Scream." The Catholic position on abortion was articulated by Pope John Paul II when he declared, "We will stand up in defense of unborn human life every time it is threatened." Jesus did not abrogate the law. The Fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is still operative even for "devout and active Catholics." We do legislate morality on stealing, libel, drunk driving, child molesting — although abortion, the ultimate child molestation at present is excepted — incest, slave holding, etc. The preamble of the Constitution upholds the preciousness of human life, declaring it an "inalienable right" not bestowed by government but by the Creator.

To answer his question, "What if everyone

was Christian?": As Mr. Michelini is a peculiar type of Catholic who sees nothing wrong with abortion "when needed," the answer is as obvious as it is deadly. We'd have 1,500,000 abortion deaths a year until a human life amendment is passed.

**Ursula Zeck**  
East Water Street  
Waterloo

### 'Fatima' draws people to God

#### To the Editor:

Thank you very much for the publicity you gave the WXXI TV 21 showing of "Fatima."

I am sure many people will draw closer to God after seeing this film. Our Blessed Mother's message at Fatima can bring peace to our world if we follow it, each one of us. Thank you again.

**Marian Buchheit**  
County Line Road  
Webster

### Father Paul J. Cuddy

## On the Right Side



#### To Father George Norton, diocesan communications director:

There are those who think the devil is very active in the world and that he creates impediments to our evangelization for the Lord Jesus. I thought of that regarding the PBS-TV presentation of "Father Damien." Ever since I read "Damien, the Leper" by John Farrow years ago, I have been both an admirer and an advocate of that wonderful Belgian Sacred Hearts missionary to the lepers in Molokai. I visited the leper colony there when I took a group to Hawaii seven years ago, and I celebrated Mass there in the sisters' chapel.

Whatever happened to local PBS affiliate, Channel 21 — whether the devil or some inefficiency there, or some cross-current in the advertising department — I do not know. But the program was advertised in one paper as airing on Sunday, and in another paper for Monday. One paper said 9 p.m., and another said 10 p.m. Poor Damien! And I was so anxious for as many people to watch the program as part of our evangelization.

I phoned you, as director of communications for the diocese, thinking you might have some input. You were out of town. I called Father Schwartz, our clergy godfather, at Becket Hall and asked him to get the word around as best he could. I had to call him again to give him a different day and hour. I announced to our Sunday congregation that the show would be broadcast on Sunday night, and someone later told me there was a man named Damien in Sunday's play, but it was a mini-series about the Roundheads and the King of England. Who was that, Charles II?

I really was chagrined that your office of communications had not advertised it, nor had the Courier. It seems to me that you and the Courier and the TV stations should get together and advertise ahead of time what might be of Catholic interest and concern. I suggested that to a nice public relations lady at Channel 21, and she quite agreed. It has always seemed strange that the U.S. dioceses take up a big communications collection without

anything much happening as a result. Meanwhile, a little nun, Sister Angelica in Birmingham, has set up a functioning television station that reaches more than 3 million people each day. Everyone agrees on the impact of TV and radio on the country, and we who are supposed to be great evangelists do not very well use even free programs that are powerful. I think off-hand of powerful "Becket" and even more-powerful "Man for All Seasons," Bolt's wonderful presentation on St. Thomas More. I heard Jack Valenti, the cinema mogul, say in a TV interview, "I consider 'The Man for All Seasons' the finest movie ever made!" Yet when it first came to Rochester years ago, there was just a corporal's guard at the Regent theatre. I said to the manager, "I'm surprised; I thought that Catholic schools would be sending students in busloads for this wonderful picture!" He replied: "So did we, but they did not!"

May I respectfully request that your office of communications, the Courier-Journal staff and the television stations get together to coordinate publicity on programs of concern to all of us?

Can we blame the devil for our own ineptitude?

#### To Father Paul Schnacky St. Joseph's Church, Wayland:

Thank you for the invitation to supply for you while you are on retreat May 19-23, and for the pulpit Saturday and Sunday, the 17th and 18th. The pulpit gives me an opportunity to peddle religious books, booklets and religious articles. In small towns, people are eager to get these things. I think that these instruments of prayer and devotion floating around the territory for months and years afterward are more important than any words I might say from the pulpit.

However, your First Holy Communion class will be at 11 a.m. I would not want to intrude into that beautiful occasion and will leave the talk to the children entirely to you. Like your brother, Monsignor Al, you are a devoted shepherd, and the Kingdom of God is stronger because of you and him. Prospera!