

# The Editor's Desk

## Media masquerade

An article in this Monday's Rochester Democrat and Chronicle described a dilemma local media outlets are facing. Should they agree to publish or broadcast new AIDS-conscious advertisements for condoms?

Spurred by the U.S. surgeon general's recommendation that condoms be used to reduce the risk of AIDS transmission during sex, condom manufacturers are placing these ads in national women's magazines and on some cable-television stations. A magazine ad featuring the photo of a pensive-looking young woman is typical of the lot. "I'll do a lot for love, but I'm not ready to die for it," its headline declares.

One of the TV sales managers quoted in the article said his station probably wouldn't run the condom ads because they would offend Catholics, who would find it "hard to distinguish between condoms as birth control and condoms for AIDS."

Something tells me that someday Catholics are going to be blamed for thwarting the dissemination of the condom companies' wonderful message. If reactionaries like us would stop trying to make the rest of the world live by our moral values, somebody's bound to say, the spread of AIDS could be greatly reduced through the use of condoms.

When that day comes, however, I won't accept the blame. I realize that people are going to do as they please, whether Catholics approve or not. And as much as I believe casual sex is wrong, I don't want people to die gruesome deaths because they — and those with whom they have contact — refused to obey Catholic teachings.

But when I see the condom ads that were discussed in the newspaper article, I can't believe that they were really intended to serve as a "surgeon general's warning" on sex. I keep thinking that their real message is: "Casual sex is great, except that it could kill you. But not if you use XYZ Brand condoms. With XYZ Brand, you can do whatever you want and never worry about AIDS again!"

That's not a public-service message; it's just another advertising gimmick. It has nothing to do with protecting the public, but everything to do with the almighty dollar. It's a way to make a buck by manipulating fear of a horrible disease. And, when such ads masquerade as humanitarian warnings in order to be accepted by local newspapers and TV stations, this Catholic is indeed offended.

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

## A Closer Look



## Merrily we go!

It gets a trifle tedious — the January numbers game, that is. In January, President Reagan gives to Congress and the American people a proposed national budget for the fiscal year.

This year, as in previous years, the president has proposed a budget that increases military spending. The budget also cuts agriculture, transportation, education, employment and social services. Roughly, that means (and I'll spare you the numbers) school lunch programs for poor children as well as child nutrition programs, college aid for students, the food stamp program, aid to families with dependent children (should I go on?) VA and FHA mortgages, and so on — all to be slashed beyond the extent of previously almost unbelievable measures.

Technically, no one can accuse the administration of wanting to eliminate entirely the domestic programs that help to keep the nation's poor barely alive. Drastic reductions of domestic programs don't mean their total elimination because, mathematically, any amount, even continuously halved, will always result in something. Of course that something may be practically indiscernible — as, for example, the dollar figure allotted to domestic programs after a budget hatchet-job. Nevertheless, something will continue to exist.

In addition to these budget-cutting proposals, January brought some proposed salary increases to public servants and legislators. Again, while I don't want to bore you with excessive figures, let me say that unless Congress acts to prevent it, legislative salaries will increase to \$89,500 from \$77,400, and salaries of cabinet officers to \$99,500 from \$88,800.

To demonstrate that inflated salaries are not a phenomenon that strikes only on a national level, I might add that, recently, New York's Mayor Ed Koch had difficulty finding a replacement to fill the position of chief assistant district attorney in Manhattan. The job, which pays \$94,500, was difficult to fill because people to whom the position was offered declined, saying that the salary "would represent a financial sacrifice." At this point, I admit to struggling with the definition of what the term "public servant" — actually means.

Not to be accused of neglecting dependents, the government awarded a one-point-something-or-other-percent increase to Social Security recipients.

Do we really have trouble trying to understand Jesus' insight into human nature, when he said, "The poor you will always have with you?"

## Ruxpin's revenge

Before Christmas, I wrote a column on "Teddy Ruxpin," the ridiculously high-priced talking bear, a toy that I informed my daughter I would not buy her for Christmas.

The column generated a lot of verbal response. A few people said — not to me directly, but to friends — "Oh, his daughter will probably receive seven or eight of those bears, after that column."

I wondered if these people were somehow insinuating that the reason I wrote the column was to get my daughter a present that I myself could not afford to buy her?

While I am not generally inclined to respond to second-hand criticism, I did feel that those remarks were somewhat unjust. On the other hand, the generosity of the people was tremendous, and I'm now offering those silly bears for sale to the public at half price.

(Only kidding! Lynn received only one bear, compliments of my brother-in-law, and he doesn't read the Courier Journal.)

## Letters

### Finds cremation article inadequate

To the Editor:

The story of the promotion among teens of Assumption's lucrative columbarium (C-J, January 8: "Teens consider touchy topic of cremation") was inadequate enough to make a parent cry. Hoping against hope that the course itself was more accurate, I think it is still necessary to invite expanded pastoral comments on the subject of our resurrection, particularly our constant identity and our substantial corporeality, however transformed.

Father Heyman went beyond what we know when he stated, "We do not believe that this corporeal body will come back." Granted that we do not know what will comprise its underlying substance (and that this doesn't matter a whit), we're going to be able to recognize it as *our body*. It doesn't make any difference to us now that

our cells have changed completely, perhaps more than once since our infancy. Nor does it matter if one's body disintegrates completely after death; God will reconstitute it.

My husband proposed an interesting thought; since all time is present to God at once, God could take our bodies from any point in time and transform them, even imbuing them with marks through which we became more holy later in earthly life; He is not limited to working with dust or ashes. St. Paul said that those who are still living at the end of time will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye.

Those of us who trust the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* can therefore trust the gospels to be historically accurate, without attempting to explain away the infancy nar-

ratives, Christ's miracles and the resurrection accounts. Christ rose in *His identifiable body*. St. Thomas put his doubting finger into the nailprints and believed. Christ ate a piece of fish to help convince the apostles that He was very much alive. He wouldn't let Magdalen hug Him because He hadn't yet "ascended" — perhaps there was some further transformation yet to go — but (according to St. Matthew) she or some other women got hold of His feet. Nonetheless, there is clearly set before us the continuing identity of Christ with His body that walked this earth, lived and died and rose again. And Christ is our pattern, the very principle of our eternal life in Him, already begun at baptism and nurtured in the Eucharist.

There is some association — which we won't understand until we get to heaven — between our body and our soul from conception through resurrection that does not allow us to dismiss our body at any stage as not "ours" or even as not substantial or corporeal, although we must do with it for a while.

One senses throughout the article the door of philosophy without metaphysics, of subjective scriptural exegesis pulling away from the patrimony of faith, of empirical science without the checks and balances provided by an adequate philosophy, and of the poverty of modern psychology stained with divorce from the substantial soul with constant identity. Are we giving our teens "nice news" or the Good News?

Ray Guinsbeck  
Penview Dr.  
Rochester

Judy Echaniz  
Barrington St.  
Rochester

### Responses don't reflect law's purpose

To the Editor:

I am writing about the question asked high school students about drinking among teenagers. The questions and answers do not reflect the purpose of the law raising the drinking age to 21. Making it more difficult to obtain alcoholic beverages has reduced the number of cases of drunken driving by those under 21. The purpose of the law was to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by drunken teenaged drivers. Statistics prove the law has accomplished this purpose to a sizable extent.

Personally, I couldn't care less if

teenagers drink alcoholic beverages, as long as they don't drive. But I would be very, very concerned if such a teenager ran a red light and crashed into my car or came head-on at me. The purpose of the law was to reduce or eliminate the combination of drinking and driving.

Many adults in their 40s, 50s and 60s lack the common sense and good judgment to refrain from driving while they are drunk, so don't ride with anyone who is intoxicated, regardless of age.

Ray Guinsbeck  
Penview Dr.  
Rochester

### Still disappointed that college chose Gov. Cuomo for degree

To the Editor:

I have just reread the front-page article in the Nov. 13 Courier-Journal ("At SJFC inauguration: Governor makes case for the liberal arts"). This article was continued on page 5, with a picture of the governor giving the principal address at the inauguration of St. John Fisher College's new president; the article also states that the governor received an honorary degree during the ceremonies.

As a worker in the vineyards of the national Right to Life movement for more than 10 years, I find the choice of the governor as a speaker at this university disappointing and frustrating. Aren't the officials of St. John Fisher College aware that, each year, approximately \$14 million dollars is set aside in the

governor's budget for Medicaid funding of abortions? New York state is one of only eight states (as well as the District of Columbia) that do this.

Aren't the officials of the college aware that the governor refused to accept or acknowledge the thousands of pro-life petitions that the New York state Right to Life (organization) gathered and tried to present to him at budget time? Aren't the college officials aware that, with 1,500,000 abortions a year done in the United States — which total more than 4,000 per day — Governor Cuomo's New York state has the dubious distinction of being number one in the nation?

This present-day holocaust goes on day after day, year after year.

Where are the voices that should be crying out against it? The silent majority either ignores it or hopes it will go away. I read a quotation the other day: "If you don't raise your voice, you're an accomplice." Priorities are all mixed up!

James P. Tracy  
Chairman, Cayuga County  
Right to Life Committee  
Westwood Drive  
Auburn

### Thanks for article

To the Editor:

Thank you for the article on Project Life and the Problem Pregnancy Center, which appeared in the January 15 issue of the Courier-Journal.

Some of your readers may be interested in attending a fund-raising dinner for Project Life and the center. The featured speaker will be Joe Scheidler, a nationally known pro-life activist and the author of *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*.

The dinner will be on Friday, February 6, at 7 p.m. at the Maple Dale Party House. All are welcome. Donations will be accepted after the dinner. Reservations can be made by calling me at (716) 621-3906.

On Saturday, February 7, a demonstration will take place in front of Genesee Hospital from 9-10:30 a.m. Joe Scheidler will participate in this event. He will also give a seminar on pro-life activism at St. Theodore's Church on February 7 at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome and urged to attend these events.

Every Saturday morning at 9:30, a small group of Catholics pray the rosary in front of Highland Hospital. The rosary service is offered in reparation for the sin of abortion and as a prayer to end abortion. Please consider participating in this important aspect of the pro-life movement.

Susan Perkins  
Maple Avenue  
Elmira

Lynne Buonemani  
Holcroft Road  
Rochester

### Scripture shows error of writer's view

To the Editor:

Is there no one out there to speak for God? Having read with great horror the letter from Sandra A. Behnke (C-J Opinions, Dec. 18, 1986: "Men, not God, say gays are sinners"), I feel I must reply.

Ms. Behnke, you were in grave error when you wrote "that Jesus didn't speak for or against homosexuality." He most certainly did. If Jesus and God are the same

Godhead, you have only to read the Old Testament Scripture to discover some very in-depth teachings.

I will start with Leviticus 18:22: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind. It is an abomination." And Leviticus 20:13: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination."

One New Testament reading that is also helpful is Romans 1:24-26: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own heart, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed for ever."

Be cautious of changing the truth of God into a lie. God does not approve of homosexuality. He never will. Mankind didn't want to hear what Jesus had to say when He was on earth, and things haven't changed a bit since.



"I NEVER THOUGHT ANYONE COULD GET UP HERE WITH JUST NATURAL GOODNESS."