

## Editorial &amp; Opinion

## Letters

## Nicaragua not site of recent abuses

To the editor:

There has been much debate on this page about the human-rights status of Central America, most of it centering on Nicaragua. Limiting such discussion to Nicaragua only serves the agenda of those who wish to obscure far worse situations in the Reagan/Bush "democracies" of Guatemala and El Salvador.

As a freelance journalist, I've recently done some research and spoken with a representative of Amnesty International who helped put Central American human rights into perspective.

"In Nicaragua, there have been isolated cases of politically motivated disappearances and killings since the Sandinistas took power, but it has been the exception rather than the rule," Rona Weitz told me. "Those abuses tended to occur in the early 1980s, but don't appear to be occurring today. They still are occurring in El Salvador and Guatemala." Weitz is Latin America program coordinator for Amnesty International USA, based in Washington, D.C.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights likewise documents abuse in Central America. In 1987, that organization listed El Salvador among six nations in the world where torture is "more or less a normal element of daily life." In Guatemala, the UN estimates that nearly 75,000 civilians — mostly Indians — were exterminated by right-wing security forces between 1980-85, and that 38,000 people have "disappeared" since the 1954 CIA-backed coup.

Another CIA creation, the Contras, have used Honduras as a base for the past seven years. Their record of civilian murders, kidnappings and rape in Nicaragua runs into the tens of thousands, and is documented by several human-rights groups.

The Sandinistas' respect for human dignity in Nicaragua compares quite favorably when placed side-by-side with the U.S.-sponsored dictatorships in Central America. In fact, the Sandinista revolution is probably the most abuse-free insurrection in history — despite the Reagan/Bush war of aggression against their homeland.

John E. Milich  
Ithaca

## Priest poster might improve atmosphere in pastor's church

To the editor:

Father Cuddy's column of September 22 was an inspiration to me. Church rest rooms have long resisted the fresh air blowing through the Church as a result of Vatican II. Indeed, some of them are the abode of the abomination of desolation!

The men's room in my church is infested by an imp who locks the door of the stall and then disappears, leaving the stall inaccessible to male parishioners desiring relief there. Perhaps the *Courier-Journal* could make available a life-size poster of Father Cuddy glowering and shaking his finger in admonition. I am sure that posting it in the men's room would discourage the imp.

With thanks and every good wish, I remain,  
Sincerely yours,

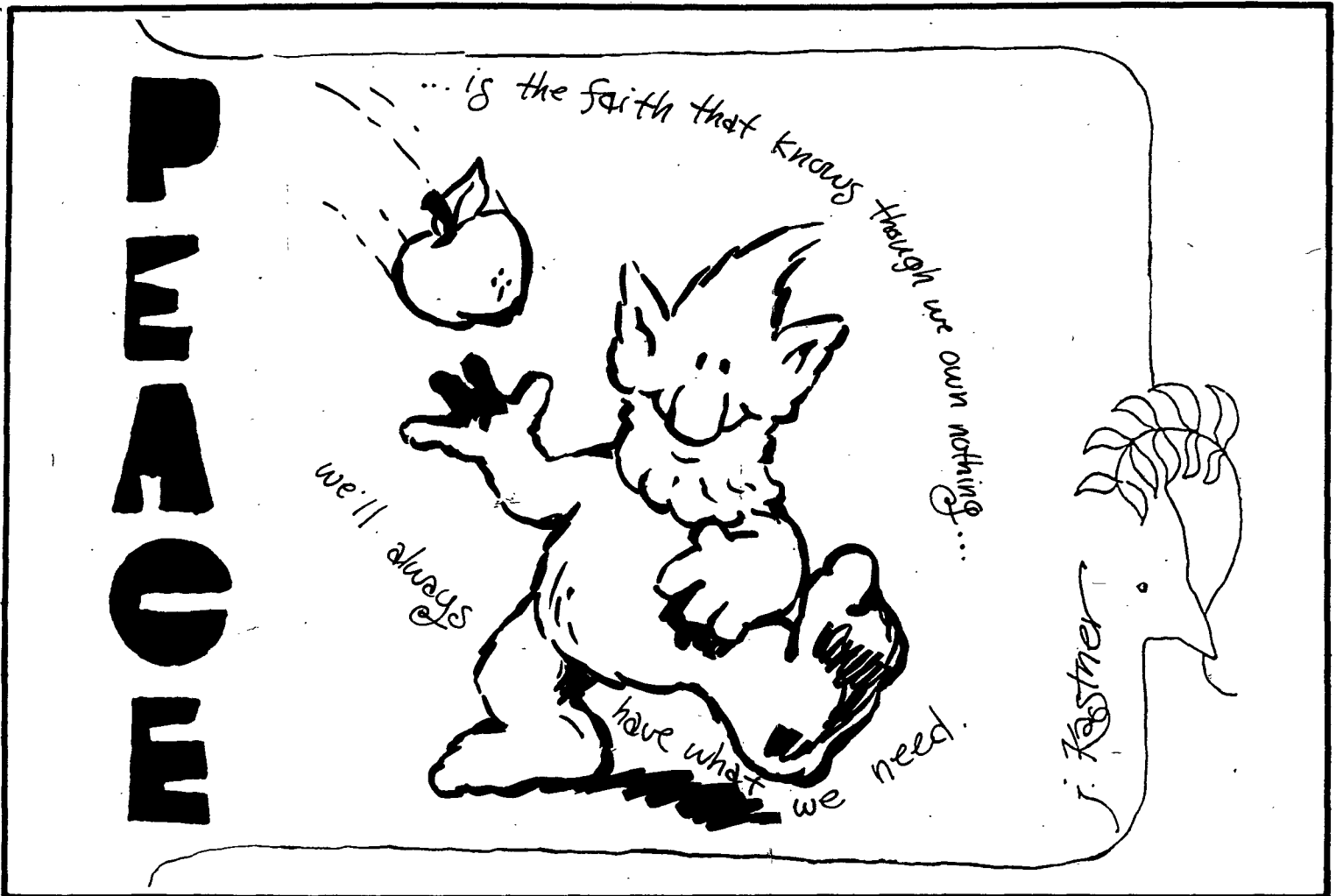
Father Robert L. Collins  
St. Thomas More Church  
East Avenue  
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sorry, Father, we don't have funds for such a project in this year's budget. Perhaps I could squeeze it in next year under Community Service?

## C-J Letters Policy

The Courier-Journal wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome all signed, original letters about current issues affecting Church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the Church. We will



## Parents eulogize coach for efforts on behalf of youths

To the editor:

Several weeks ago a dear friend of ours prematurely passed away. He was not only a friend of ours, who was also a very special friend and mold of several hundred youths in our Catholic community. We would like to use this letter to pay tribute to Don Lenzo.

Don was the basketball and softball coach in the CYO program at Mother of Sorrows for over a dozen years, always giving unselfishly of his time, his knowledge, his van and often, even of his money. Perhaps most important he taught his seventh and eighth graders sportsmanship. Like any coach, he sometimes got excited about a bad call by the ref or the other coach running up the score, but when the game was over he made sure that every youngster on the team shook hands with the other team. Especially in defeat he would gather the youngsters together to explain to them that the game was over and to come out smiling, which he always personally did. He taught the kids to respect the property and equipment that they were using. He would not tolerate candy wrappers or trash being left on the locker-room floor. More often than not, after he had finished supervising the locker room after a game, he could be seen pushing back bleachers and manning a broom to leave the gym in probably better condition when he arrived. He also collected all the uniforms and personally laundered them after each game so that the team always looked fresh.

Many were the times that he would transport the whole team in the back of his van to Waterloo or Seneca Falls or Geneva because none of the parents were "available." Don had no children of his own. On these trips he always made sure that no one went hungry, even if the parents had failed to provide lunch money for their child. There were also times that some particular child could not afford a personal warmup jacket, and Don would "just happen" to have an "extra that was left over" and always the right size.

Don also saw and encouraged potential. When our daughter was in eighth grade in 1973/74, there were no CYO sports for girls, except cheerleading. She wanted to play basketball, so she asked "Mr. Lenzo" if she could try out for the boys' team. To our surprise, she made the team and was well accepted by both Don and her all-male teammates. But after a

choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: Courier-Journal, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY, 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.

few games we realized that not all coaches and other teams shared his view. We barely knew Don then, but asked him: "Don, there's going to be a fight ahead with the CYO and other coaches. Is her talent worth the fight?" Don replied, "It is and I'll back you up all the way." That winter we did have many letters back and forth with the CYO and even the bishop, and had many "discussions" with the CYO. "We're only trying to protect her," etc., they would say. Don always gave of his time and expertise to help. Mary Ellen did get to play in some non-league games or if an occasional other coach would say he didn't mind. When softball season opened, Don allowed her to once again try out, and she won a place on the team. We went through the same problems with the CYO and other coaches — we think they were afraid their boys couldn't handle her line drives. Because of Don's encouragement, support and courage, the CYO saw the need for girls' sports,

and the following year, there were CYO leagues for girls in both basketball and softball.

We got to closely see his contributions and handling of the youngsters, and also grew to know him well and love him over the next seven years as we coordinated the MOS Sports Program. We could go on and on about his unending generosity and his love for children. His smiling face will stay in our minds as we remember what he did for the youths at Mother of Sorrows and the entire community.

We're saddened by his passing, but we are sure that the good Lord had a need for a top-notch coach for a new angels' basketball team that He was forming.

So long, Donny. So long, Coach. You are missed.

Jan and Jim Hart  
Glenbriar Drive  
Rochester

## Do we fully participate in Eucharist?

To the editor:

As often as we are at Mass, I sometimes wonder how much the faithful really participate.

When the priest places the unconsecrated host on the paten, we, the Church, as the mystical body of Christ, should spiritually place ourselves on that paten and offer our time, our talent, our treasure, our entire being to God in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

When the priest pours the wine into the chalice and then adds a little water, we again should spiritually be part of that water mingled with the wine — signifying the union of our penances, sacrifices and sufferings in union with the sacrifice of the Cross about to be reenacted in an unbloody manner. Some mistakenly think that the priest is adding just a very little water so as not to dilute the wine. The truth is that the addition of the water to the wine symbolizes the union of our humanity to divinity, and the priest, by adding just a little water tries to convey how minute our

humanity is compared to divinity. Other symbolism is the water and blood of Christ on the cross and the human and divine in Christ.

Although the divine participation in the Mass is always complete, the human participation in the offertory of the Mass is incomplete if you are not there. Missing is your part of the offertory on the paten and your part in the water mingled with the wine.

So you see, it does really matter if you are present at or absent from the Mass.

Furthermore, I would urge all priestly celebrants of the holy Eucharist to refrain from taking up a collection during the offertory because it interferes with a crucial part of the faithful's participation. Moreover, it is much more meaningful to begin the offertory after the collection has been completed — using the collection as a tangible and visible offertory gift from the faithful to the Lord.

Jerry J. Paladino  
RD 1  
Rock Stream, N.Y.

## Church visitor questions wording of Parish Note

To the editor:

Each summer my wife and I visit our children in this area. We often attend Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Hamlin. This letter concerns some comments made by your editor a few weeks ago pertaining to that church ("Parish Notes," C-J August 18).

Perhaps your comments were not intended to seem critical. However, when you say that while others are building their church's spiritual life, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is putting up a building, the inference certainly reads like a negative statement.

I am from out of state, but I would be hard put to find a spiritually stronger parish than this Hamlin community. I'd be proud to be a

member. More power to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton!

Robert J. Reynolds Sr.  
Port Charlotte, Florida

EDITOR'S NOTE: As I've already noted in personal letters to the pastor and a parishioner, we at the Courier-Journal regret the unfortunate wording of the sentences in the question. When the reporter composed those phrases, he intended to observe that St. Elizabeth Ann Seton already has built a strong spiritual community and can now afford to devote attention to the construction of a church structure. All good intentions notwithstanding, we offer sincere apologies for whatever insult may have been taken.



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