

Editorial & Opinion

Letters

Pro-lifers do support women

To the editor:

Ever since the Catholic was removed from the title of the newspaper that is supposed to be the official paper for the Diocese of Rochester, the policies and leanings of this paper have reflected the purging of Christ that is going on in the secular, humanist world around us.

This last issue was the straw that broke this persons back. First, you eliminated the pope's column to the people. Then, you folks put in one of Satan's salesman in clerical garb in the person of McBrien. You allow political advertisements for those who support or advocate abortion even though canon law specifically states that is serious sin to support, campaign for or endorse a pro-abortion candidate. Just as this Diocese is run by self-serving feminist types, this paper has turned into a mouthpiece for their "do your own thing" Catholicism. This just before the election issue was a truly amazing piece of work. By not even mentioning candidates, the three letters to the editor stressing the "wrongness" of single issue voting all specifically aimed at the abortion issue, let your bias towards Dukakis shine through. Of course not a single anti-abortion letter made it through your calculated scrutiny. These misled seamless garment folks are missing the point. The Central American issue is a political issue, the homeless are everyone's concern or should be, but they are alive and have the capability to eventually with our help rise above bad situations. The unborn are not even granted the most basic right to live. How can you speak peace and justice when these children are killed by the thousands daily in almost all American communities and then urge people to vote for a man who is an abortion advocate who will no doubt solidify laws and support for this mass killing of the most innocent amongst us? It is easy to talk about getting homes for the homeless, feeding the poor — who are alive with a chance for a better life — but how can you believe a man who advocates death for those in the womb? What kind of compassion does that show? As one who was arrested trying to prevent abortions at a clinic in Brighton, I cannot believe that so many people who are supposedly concerned about all life issues would align themselves with the pro-choice forces that paraded their pro-death leanings downtown on October 22. Fifty percent of the signs being carried were Dukakis-Bentsen signs. What a strange mix ... the peace and justice folks who claim to be against war and violence — except for those of God's children in the womb — and the pro-death forces.

Concerning your coverage of Brighton, why didn't your reporter tell about the brutal handling protestors received by the police? How four young cops brutalized an older protestor til he had to be taken away in an ambulance ... How an officer shoved a protestor's face into the cement causing him to break a tooth and cut his lip ... How after an officer dropped a handcuffed young man onto the pavement and then said "Now stay there and pray to your God and see if he saves you ..."

You printed the anonymous letter from the woman who turned to sex to escape her abusive home ... very Catholic of course, all the old chestnuts. Don't you people by now, know that so many of us who participate in public witness also provide homes, support, crisis counseling, clothes and other supports that these women and girls need? Why didn't you get the other side from one of us protestors like you always do from Planned Parenthood or the abortionist? In the guise of "fairness" you provide these anti-life forces with more of a forum than they already are able to buy. You ought to worry about rightness according to Catholic doctrine and God's Word — Thou Shalt Not Kill!

Perhaps it is good that the *Courier-Journal* doesn't have Catholic in the name any more. It is not the view you represent.

Mary Ellen Frisch
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Anonymous letter draws varied response:

To the editor:

The anonymous letter by the woman who has suffered so much agony (C-J, Nov. 3: "A woman pleads for alternatives") exposes deficiencies in our Catholic schools, and magnifies pro-life frustrations.

"This is such an emotional issue for me, and not one I feel I am able to participate in formally, due entirely to my shame," speaks volumes in understanding her ignorance concerning pro-life groups she pleads with. Understandably, she knows little of the motives and efforts of the formally involved in the movement. We are up against massive opposition and apathy in the media, and even within our American Church — which fears involvement in "single-issue" political activity. Thus, American bishops insist on the "seamless garment" nonsense, rating our politicians by their positions on all socially political issues, abortion being only one of them. To do justice to this subject would require an entire article and would deter from the main subject: one-and-a-half million babies being butchered annually in the U.S. alone — that's more than 4,000 innocent children a day! Let me hasten to say that the blame for this butchery does not lie with young women such as Mrs. Anonymous,

but rather with other groups and individuals — including our American bishops, who will not separate this vital issue from other socially political issues, the media and Planned Parenthood, to mention just three.

Let's talk about our Catholic bishops. They're responsible for setting the tone of what's taught in our Catholic schools. Here we have a young girl who, in a state of confusion, which she describes vividly, went to Planned Parenthood to deal with her problem because the Catholic school she attended sold her on that organization. Why do our schools not promote Birthright instead?! Why do our schools not promote pro-life organizations, which exist to give the very help this young woman was seeking but never received?! It is a sad fact that Right-to-Life groups have experienced difficulty getting into our Catholic schools such as Nazareth, Mercy, or others — but not for lack of trying! I love our Bishop, but I can't help believing he's allowing himself to be manipulated by others in matters that are his responsibility, alone, to deal with.

The Church speaks clearly and abundantly on all the social issues. If our schools were doing their proper job, at least our Catholics girls would be informed on such groups as AVA

(American Victims of Abortion). This group, based in Washington, and expanding throughout the land, invites many young women who went through similar agonies that our young mother described, to share their experiences with others, in the hope that exposure of such agonies can prevent similar mishaps. Its founder is Olivia Gans, who agonized much before she got courage enough to go public. Our schools have a responsibility to know about these organizations, and our public schools have similar responsibilities to inform their students of the various options available to young women, and all the alternatives to abortion.

My plea to this young woman is this: Call the Rochester Area Right-to-Life, located on Ling Road in Charlotte, 716/621-4690. Set aside any shame because the shame is not yours alone, but, even more, theirs who are shirking their responsibilities — including the *Courier-Journal* for not treating abortion as the separate issue that it really is. Our local group is trying to organize a local AVA group. You may be able to lend your own expert advice to such a group. You can be an immense help! Please become involved. You are sorely needed!

John G. Lentricchia
Rochester

Birthright lacks resources to advertise widely

To the editor:

I read an anonymous letter November 3 (C-J Nov. 3: "A woman pleads for alternatives"), submitted by a woman who suffers from previous abortions, and I was compelled to write a response. My heart literally aches for her — for the tremendous burden she carries and for her grief over lives that she denied so many years ago. Her pain is universal, and I believe her concerns for the pro-life movement are valid.

I wish there were easy answers to the abortion dilemma — both for the woman who must face the choice, and for the community that must find a humane and moral attitude regarding unplanned pregnancy. But the reality is that the choices are difficult, and they are made in the isolation of each person's heart of hearts, often at great personal suffering.

Those who protest do so in an effort to awaken a sleeping society to a tragedy that is taking place ... Those who work for organizations like Birthright do so in an effort to awaken hope in a frightened and desperate woman. The efforts of both are necessary, but by their very nature, they are mutually exclusive.

As for Birthright's visibility in the community, there is much work to be done. Our availability, our free and confidential services, our compassion and our concern are all nearly worthless if no one knows we're here. To run just a 2x2-inch advertisement in the TV Book each week costs us over \$800 a month; we know that advertising is essential, and yet it is so costly that constant efforts must be made

just to secure funds for its continuation.

Finally, to the woman who wrote the letter: You mention a reluctance to give any personal time to pro-life activities because of shame you feel over your abortions. I heard in your letter the voice of a compassionate and understanding woman: the kind of woman the movement so desperately needs. Don't let shame hole you at arms' length from a young woman in need of a friend — the first step to-

ward healing is in active, loving service. Who better to understand than one who has felt the weight of that lonely decision herself?

My hope is that this letter will clarify the issues that have so divided this community of late, and perhaps give some solace to one who is suffering.

Camille Taylor
executive director
Birthright of Rochester

Respect for life doesn't end at birth

To the editor:

I read with sympathy the letter of the anonymous woman on this week's front page re pro-life activities (CJ, Nov. 3: "One woman's plea for alternatives").

My husband and I support Birthright because we share her attitude from another viewpoint. We wish we could make all pro-lifers understand that life does not stop at birth. The child's pain does not stop with its first breath. We've seen the pain. And we've seen the products of that pain.

If you really want to be pro-life, be a foster parent to a troubled teenager, or more than one. Be a houseparent in an institution for troubled kids. Work with the products of poverty, drugs and discrimination in a neighborhood community center. "Adopt" the kids in

your neighborhood. Give them a "place to go," an alternative to the street or "the corner." Visit the mentally ill children at the local mental hospital — they are no longer called "insane asylums" except by the ignorant.

These kids are all the ones who would have been aborted if pro-lifers had not saved them. For that we thank God. But the pro-lifers' responsibility to them does not stop by guaranteeing that first breath! There's a world of suffering out there, and in a paraphrase of the conciliar documents, if you don't help the needy, you kill them. Pro-life doesn't stop.

And we have practiced what I'm preaching.

Kathy Crane
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