

Editorial and Opinion

Advocate for children stresses importance of Andrew's Center

To the editor:

"Foster parents learn to give is to receive" — this newsworthy article appeared in the December 22, 1988 issue of the *Courier-Journal*. I hope that many of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Monroe County took the time to read this story of love and caring in action.

Sister Kathleen Kolmer and Sister Rita Habecker co-direct Andrew's Center, a placement for children in foster care. These two sisters have provided a "home" to more than 100 children — many of them children with disabilities.

As Administrative Assistant of CASA — Court Appointed Special Advocates — I fully realize and appreciate the importance of the continued existence of Andrew's Center. Foster parents, particularly those who will take special needs children, those who provide the daily nurturing and family atmosphere needed by these

children, cannot be lost.

The news of the impending possibility of the Sisters' and their foster children losing their home causes me great concern. I fully realize everything is in God's hands, but my question is, "What can we as members of the Church of the Diocese of Rochester do to facilitate the continuation of God's work at the Andrew's Center, or at another location?"

Recently many of our Catholic brothers and sisters have been in the news — speaking out against abortion. Here we have children who are being given the opportunity to live and thrive. Wouldn't it be worthwhile to direct our united efforts to helping a cause as important as this? The Sisters and the children need a "home."

Patricia M. Slimmer
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Pittsford

Nicaraguan missionaries need help

To the editor:

(Awhile) ago, it was my privilege to visit and pray with 20 Capuchin Friars living in and serving God's people in Nicaragua. They are a remarkable group of men, many of whom have been living in Central America for more than 40 years. The day after I left, the terrible Hurricane Joan struck that country with devastating force. The Capuchin vice provincial in Central America, Father Jose Antonio Marquez, wrote to me and sent me photographs of two of our primary areas of ministry: Bluefields and Rama. The hurricane came ashore at Bluefields and leveled the city. Already desperately poor,

Bluefields is now a shambles. While the government was able to warn the people to leave before the hurricane struck, thus averting overwhelming death tolls, hundreds still died. These people need help.

As many readers of your newspaper already know, our government has decided not to send humanitarian aid to Nicaragua for fear that aid will be used for military purposes. Nevertheless, the Nicaraguan people are desperate. Your readers can help.

Without fear of having your money used for military arms, you can send your donations to: Father Jose Antonio Marquez, OFM Cap., c/o The Capuchin Mission Association, 210 West 31st Street, New York, NY 10001-2876.

I personally assure you that every penny will be sent directly to our friars who will use it to rebuild the lives, homes and churches of the Nicaraguan people.

Father Jack Rathschmidt, OFM Cap.
Provincial Minister
New York-New England
Capuchin Province of Mary

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 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, New York 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.

Midwife character in nativity story disregards significance of Virgin Birth

To the editor:

Cindy Basset's fanciful introduction of a "Ruth the midwife" into the biblical Nativity scene (C-J, Dec. 22: "The Bible Corner") was surprising, to say the least. Unfortunately such reconstruction of the Infancy Narratives disregards the importance of the Virgin Birth of Christ.

The Blessed Virgin Mary did not need the assistance of any midwife in the delivery of her Divine Child. As the Fathers of the Church

have well explained and taught, the Virgin Birth — like the Virginal conception — was itself a miraculous event. In his recent book theologian Frederick M. Jelly, OP, noted that the Latin Fathers "emphasized the presentation of Mary's bodily integrity, while the Eastern Fathers stressed the aspect of her joy and freedom from pain in giving birth to Jesus. Mary's bodily integrity in the virginal parturition was illustrated in the patristic tradition by comparing it with Christ's miraculous rising from the enclosed

sepulchre, and with his appearance to the Apostles in the upper room when He entered into their midst through closed doors" (*Madonna: Mary in the Catholic Tradition*, OSV, 1986, p.84).

Thus, as St. Bernard and the Saints have taught, the miraculous birth of the Son of God is part of the Church's understanding of the Holy Virgin's remaining a virgin during the birth of Christ. She needed no assistance. St. Luke testifies to this in emphasizing that it was "she (who) brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger" (Luke 2:7).

James Likoudis, President
Catholics United for the Faith

All should be invited to Christian celebration

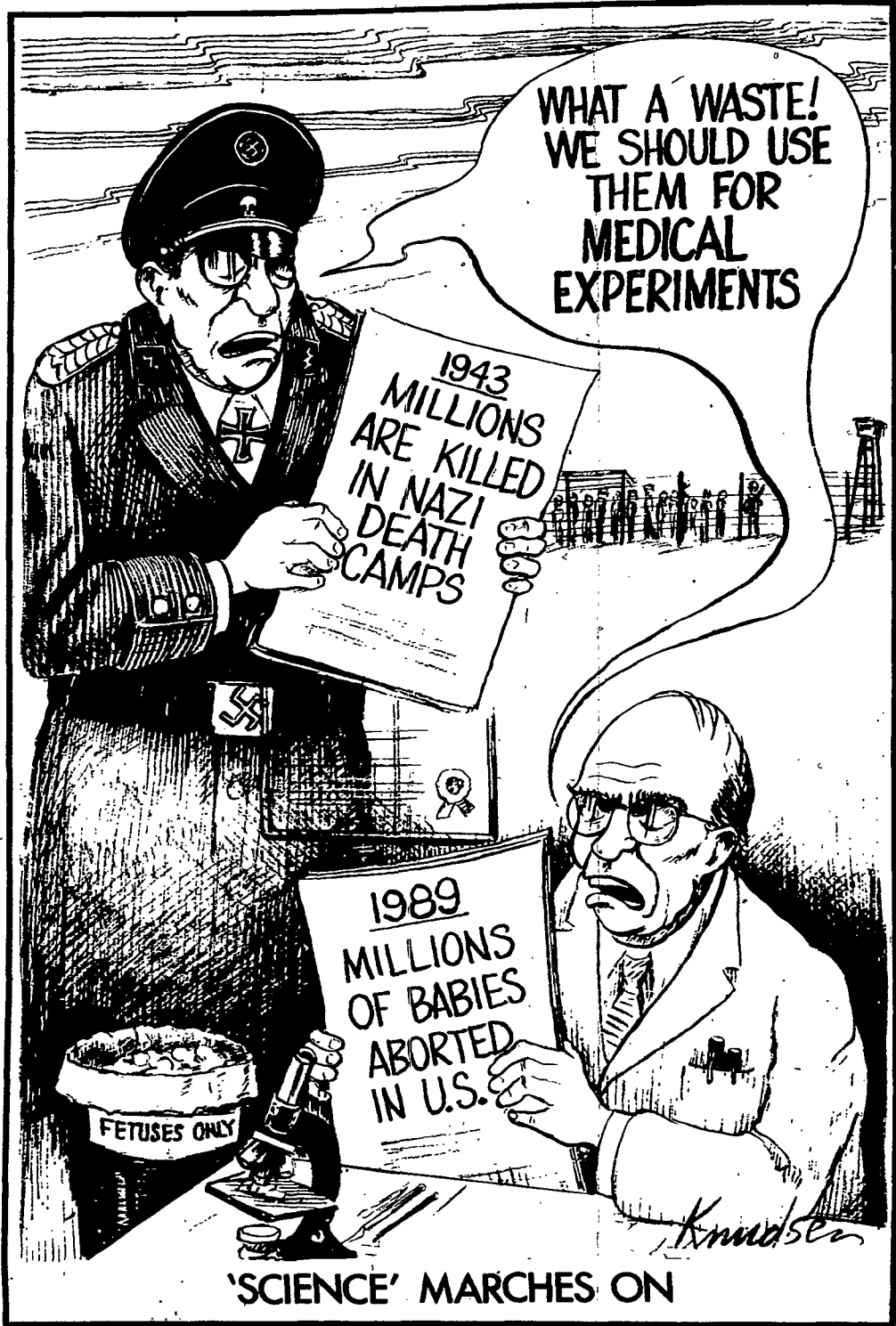
To the editor:

Since when has it become inappropriate to recognize the contributions of our armed forces to our Society (C-J, Jan. 1: "Staffers decry display of militarism") — a society that has enjoyed the benefits of security and peace and the right to worship according to its conscience because of their existence? Also since when has it become fashionable to exclude a component of our society, the military, from participating in the celebration of a Christian feast? Why we wouldn't do that even to a communist atheist. All people are invited to Christian observances. That is a basic tenet of Christianity.

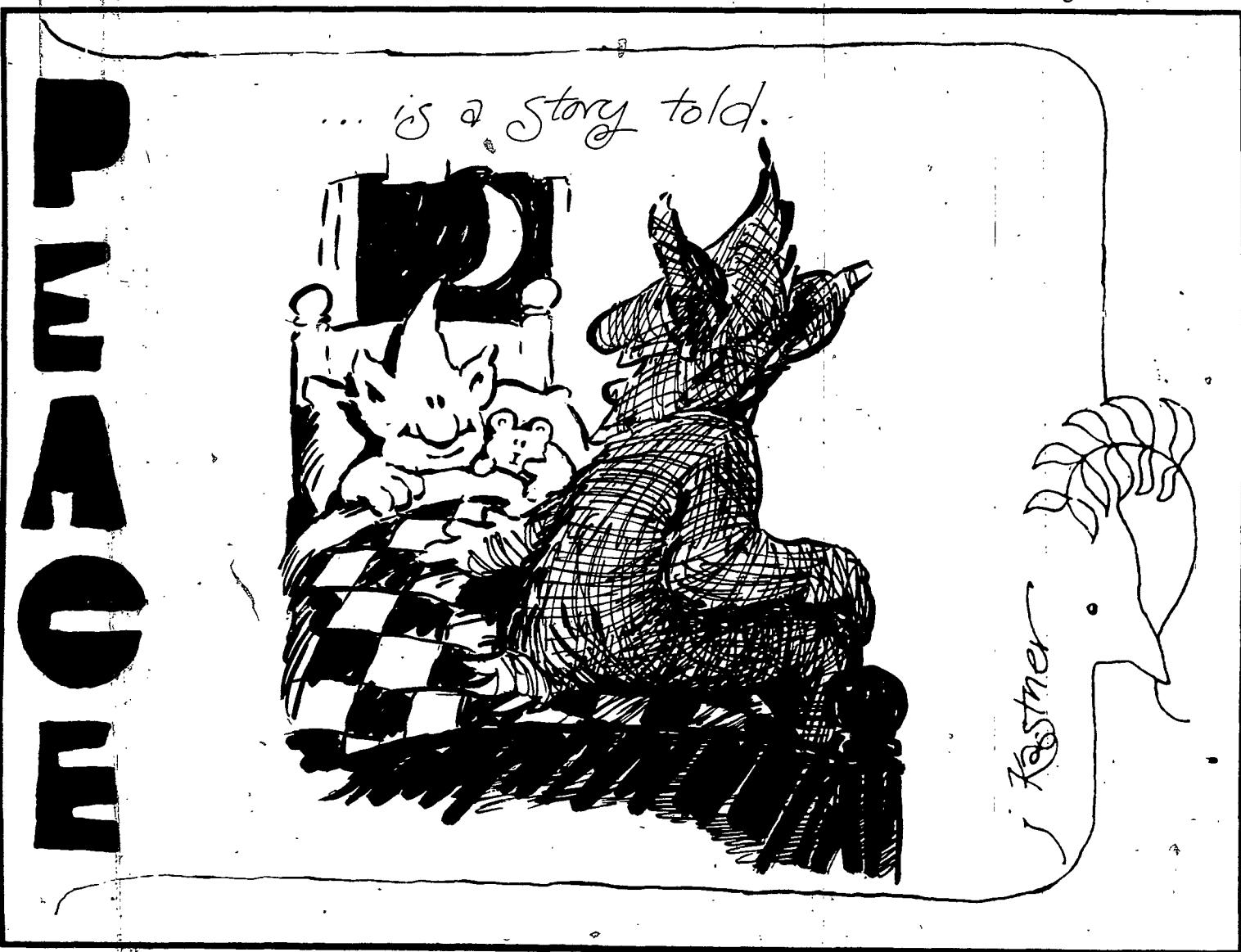
This type of mind-set can disparage a community parade for its own purposes, but is typically silent on the question of appropriateness when religious representation is inserted in demonstrations protesting the defense at the Romulus Army Depot — a defense which preserves our liberties so that we may enjoy our freedoms of expression and worship.

Isn't it peculiar that these people can treat our armed forces as if they are foreign to our society? From their attitude one could easily assume that our armed forces exist solely for militarism and oppression, since only short shrift, if any, is given by these same people to the existence, exploitation and threat of leftist armed forces on our globe.

William T. Hammill
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