

Nattering nabobs of negativism

The more importance that is given to the non-ordained, "the less ordained we will have."

So stated Auxiliary Bishop John A. Elya of the Melkite Diocese of Newton, Mass., at last week's meeting of U.S. bishops in Baltimore.

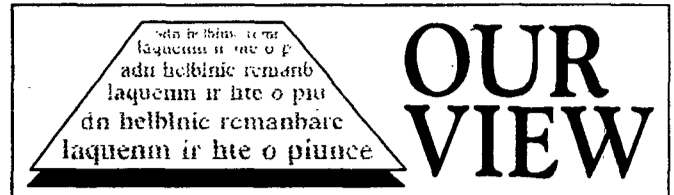
Bishop Elya was arguing against delegating lay people to assist at marriages when no priest or deacon is available — a practice he linked with "Massless Sundays," and "priestless Masses."

Later in the week, retired Bishop William E. McManus of Fort Worth, Ind., characterized the U.S. bishops' guidelines for Sunday worship in the absence of a priest as "a monster that could destroy the Sunday Mass tradition and Sunday Mass obligation in one of the few countries where it's still taken seriously."

Why not reconsider what has been an "ecclesial obscenity" — ordaining women and/or married men, Bishop McManus wondered? No way, replied the new chairman of the bishop's Committee on Vocations, Elden F. Curtiss of Helena, Mont., who believes vocations among male celibates "are out there."

Twenty years after Vatican II, the priesthood of all believers is facing a future without ordained priests, but everybody's a critic when it comes to addressing the situation.

While the conference hall in Baltimore echoed with naysaying, people in pews from Lubbock, Texas, to Valdez, Alaska, continued to be bemused and confused by the irony of what's called



a "vocation crisis."

There is, in fact, no shortage of Catholics who feel called to vocations. Earlier this month at Nazareth College, for instance, 120 men and women attended "Don't Throw in the Towel," a gathering of the Rochester Women's Ordination Conference. Dozens of those present claim the call to priesthood, but cannot answer within our church.

Hundreds more continue to answer the call to serve the church as lay ministers.

Where our church has fallen short is in finding and supporting enough men who are willing to live as celibate priests.

We wish our bishops' conference's response to this shortage were clearer and stronger.

But like a 96-year-old Catholic woman from Valdez, most of us "non-ordained" realize that our faith is from God and doesn't depend solely on the priests who serve us.

"We've had no priests. We've had wonderful priests. We've had nutty priests," the woman told her bishop. "And I assure you that we're all still here and the parish is strong."

— The Editors



The Lord doesn't judge us by the church we attend

To the editor:

This may sound like a human interest story, so be it, aren't we all human before God?

As I sit here on my deck on this beautiful God given day, I am looking up to the most gorgeous blue sky and the only thing in the way is a beautiful rich green maple tree, about 27 years old and a weeping willow, about the same age. The green and blue make me wonder about the glory that God has given us to appreciate — but how many of us take the moment to honor the glory of God.

The beauty around us is so gracious, if we take the time to see it with our eyes.

I had a moment of another experience about two weeks ago that my heart is bursting to share with other people of God.

I was invited to share in a Sunday church service to listen to my youngest son talk about his experience as a Christian Counselor at a day camp for two weeks. I was invited to the First Presbyterian on East Avenue in Rochester.

I happily joined the congregation with the idea of hearing my son (Michael's) view on being with 10- to 13-year-old children, daily for two weeks. Michael took

his two week vacation from hairstyling to be with these children.

I can't put it all on paper, but from my heart I will share with you some of what he spoke about.

He spoke on who he was and what brought him to this point in life after 24 years.

There were so many things of his past life that he so eloquently spoke of, as the tears flowed down my cheeks. I couldn't believe this was my son, Michael, reminiscing about his Catholic upbringing and the Christian home he came from, and how happy he was his mom and dad were walking with Our Lord at the time of his father's death in 1982. At the time Michael was a senior in high school.

Michael told of an experience he had a short time later in New York City. A man came up to him on the street and said, "Hey man, you look lost." Michael replied, looking the man in the eyes, "I'm not lost buddy," and turned to his friends and said, "What is with this guy, is he high on drugs?"

Michael never forgot this experience, and all at once, a few years later he was sitting in the back pew of this church with a

Unlike abortion, capital punishment doesn't destroy the lives of innocent human beings

To the editor:

In his recent letter announcing Respect Life Month, Bishop Clark chose to lump together "abortion, euthanasia, pornography, capital punishment, and suicide" under the heading "contemporary threats to human life."

The problem with such an approach is that it fails to make certain key distinctions. Actually, only two of the above mentioned issues, abortion and euthanasia, involve the taking of innocent human life by a second party.

Truly, it is especially misleading to lump together abortion and capital punishment. Abortion is now and always has been held by the teaching church to be murder, i.e., the taking of innocent human life, and therefore wrong in all circumstances except when to give birth would endanger the life of the mother. Capital punishment is not considered to be murder because it is not the taking of innocent human life.

The Church therefore, does not now have, nor has she ever taken an official stance either for or against the use of capital punishment as a capital means of implementing criminal justice. Individual Catholics are left free to either oppose or support its implementation. In other words, unlike abortion, capital punishment is not a cut-and-dried moral issue. Its justification though surely questioned by many, is within the realm of acceptable Catholic positions, regarding political issues of moral significance.

The same does not hold true for abortion.

The most unfortunate possible consequence of lumping all these issues together is that it tends to obscure the evil reality that is the widespread practice of abortion today.

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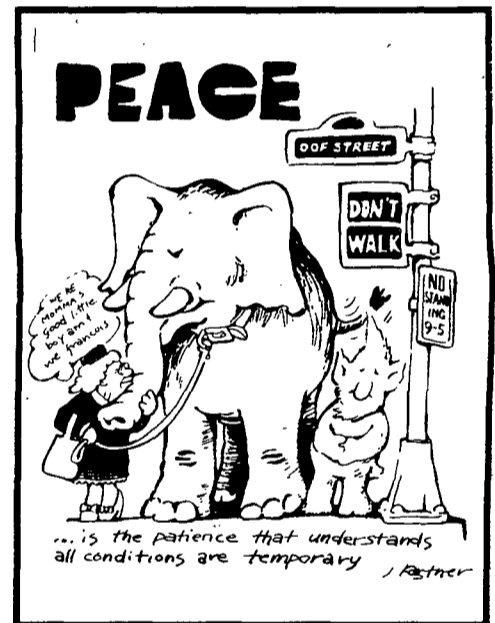
dear friend at a Sunday service and he felt like he and the minister were the only two people among the whole congregation.

Sunday after Sunday, and through his occupation, he was learning for himself, who Jesus really was, and who Michael was and is. A child of God.

He now knows, for himself, that when he walks through the Kingdom of Heaven, God is not going to point a finger at him and say, "My child, what was the name of the church you attended?"

If we walk with the Lord, aren't we all children of God?

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Pro-choice camp holds abortion right sacred

To the editor:

Your editorial view on the economics of choice deserves comment. You seem to assume that the abortion option among hardship pregnancies would be minimal if the support economics were better. It's a utopic, secular position most everyone can agree on.

The harsh reality is that the pro-abortion camp really doesn't care how much money goes towards pre- and post-natal care. Their bottom line is an unconditional and uncompromising right to kill the unborn wherever and whenever. That right is sacred to them since human life has a con-

ditional value attached to it.

The Catholic position is the best position because of its simplicity and truth. The church gives unconditional value to all human life. All life comes from God and is destined to return. Abortion quickens the soul's return by cruelly shortening the life.

Granted, more economic support should be available for those choosing life. However, choosing life involves the cross, a symbol the world has never accepted.

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