

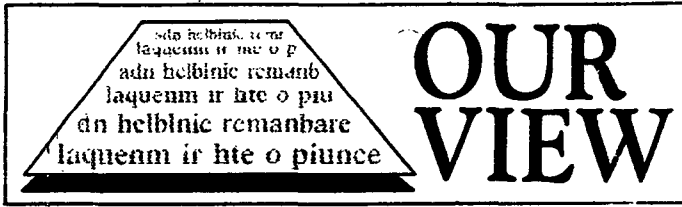
U.S. should swallow hard to promote peace

Our government has choked on a fish bone after swallowing a couple of whales. President George Bush suspended U.S. dialogue with the Palestinian Liberation Organization June 20 because the organization refused to disavow a May 30 terrorist raid on Israel.

The Israeli government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir rejoiced at the announcement by President Bush, who said the United States "can't digest (contacts with the PLO) as long as this terrorist act is sticking in our throats."

We ought to swallow harder at a time when the prospect of war is growing ever more present in the Middle East. Violence is a tool employed by all actors in the region. Why should the administration react so strongly to an ineffectual Palestinian raid, yet never seriously question our financial support of Israel's repressive policies?

Our extreme sensitivity to Palestinian violence also stands in contrast to the \$1 million we send each day to the government of El Salvador, whose soldiers' hands are bloodied by the murders of six Jesuit priests and two women, and whose population has been decimated by tens of thousands of deaths during a decade of civil war.



Nor did the killing of hundreds of Chinese demonstrators and the jailing of thousands more following last June's pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square dissuade President Bush from extending China's most-favored-nation trading status earlier this month.

Talks between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the U.S. ambassador in Tunisia began in December, 1988, after Arafat conceded Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism. The PLO leader's voice remained largely conciliatory during the ensuing 18 months, yet Israel has made no corresponding concessions, claiming that Arafat is not trustworthy.

Inevitably, as Israel balked at one peace proposal after another, one of the PLO's unruly factions confirmed Israeli fears. Abu Abbas, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Front and a PLO executive committee member, claimed responsibility for the May 30 raid.

The PLO then issued a statement condemning attacks against civilians in general, and announced an inquiry into the raid.

The statement was no more than a token attempt to preserve some kind of connection between the United States and 1.4 million Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories. But the PLO itself sat atop a volcano in late May after a deranged Israeli shot 18 unarmed Arab workers near Tel Aviv, touching off the worst rioting in two years and a corresponding Israeli-army crackdown in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Given Israel's intransigence, Palestinian leaders predict that the two-and-one-half-year-old *intifadeh* will escalate beyond rocks and fire bombs, and will penetrate into Israel itself.

Pope John Paul II, who has consistently supported the right of Palestinians to a homeland and to a role in negotiating Middle East peace, last week called for the prayers of all Christians and a common search for solutions "inspired by justice" with "full respect for the rights of every person and every community."

That appeal shouldn't be more than our government can chew.

— The Editors

'Distressed' by bishop's hopes for future of the church

To the editor:

I was distressed to read of Bishop Clark's reported lecture in the *Courier* (CC May 24: "Bishop offers hopes for church of tomorrow") in which he advocated a reconsideration of Church beliefs regarding the role of women in the Church, clerical celibacy, Catholic sexual teaching, abortion, and the necessity of conformity to Church liturgical discipline. It is disconcerting when the chief shepherd of a local Church has such little faith in the Church's magisterium to reflect the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, we

are at the mercy either of a hierarchical Church, divinely ordained and governed, or an unbridled democracy refusing to submit to any other wisdom or judgment than that to which its infallible will avers.

Those professing to believe in the Christian revelation are largely indistinguishable from the masses who have fled organized religion. Bishop Clark sees this as an opportunity for "dialogue" with the culture. I disagree. But I can hardly blame him alone for the Church's loss of status. We're all to blame. More than ever, we need courageous priests to remind us of our pro-

found dignity and responsibility as Christians. Perhaps such is deemed extraordinary treatment for those already dying of hunger and thirst for the truth — a way and life.

Catholics probably watch mindless television such as soap operas and sitcoms which destroy their capacities to apprehend life as it is meant to be, and to respond to their neighbors' needs almost to the same extent as non-Christians. When's the last time anyone heard in a homily that such use of one's time is probably venially sinful, as well as an embarrassment to God's endowment of his sons and daughters with a share in his intelligence?

The idea that the human body is both beautiful and related to our vocations as men and women who image God is mocked by many current fashions — especially the casual and swimwear which suggest that our sexual natures are to be indiscriminately paraded in provocative fashion. I can't recall hearing in any homily that most women's swimwear is immoral and shouldn't be worn, but neither have I

ever heard a homily on modesty. But Christians are just as modest as everyone else, so what's the point? Priestly popularity, parish revenues? ...

Rejecting contraception teaches us that our sexuality is not merely physiological, but encompasses a spiritual fertility. Such fertility in this age of gross infidelity will not come about absent the suffering inherent in our natural vulnerability, accepted for the sake of truth and love. Likewise, the vulnerability of the woman with child — a symbolism disconcerting to feminism — reminds both men and women of that vulnerability of obedience to the truth. That obedience is constitutive of participation in the mystical life of the Trinity. Oh, Most Holy Trinity arouse in our shepherds such zeal for their flocks, that their preaching might inspire in us the readiness to incarnate in the world your love for love.

Helen Ann Wagner
Lark Street
Rochester

Few state candidates espouse 100-percent pro-life viewpoints

To the editor:

If one were to judge by press coverage to date, there are few, if any pro-life candidates running for the four top statewide offices in the coming elections.

For the record, the candidates designated by the Right to Life Party this past Sunday are Louis P. Wein for governor, Gertrude G. Manning for lieutenant governor, Donna Marie Kearney for comptroller, and Robert F. Nolan for attorney general. ...

Lou Wein is the only 100-percent pro-life candidate for governor. Both Cuomo on the Democratic line and Rinfret on the Republican line are beyond the pale. Herb London, on the Conservative line, supports the killing of unborn children who are conceived through rape or incest.

Because of the Republicans' disgraceful adoption of a pro-abortion plan and selec-

tion of a pro-abortion designee for governor, Lou Wein, who is a Republican, will attempt to get enough signatures on petitions to challenge Rinfret in the Republican primary. If successful, he will have a chance to run on the Republican line as well as the Right to Life line in November. Henry Hewes, who ran for mayor of New York City last year, is spearheading that effort.

According to newspaper stories, the Democrats intend to make abortion the number one issue. The Republicans and Conservatives are determined to talk about anything but. It will be very interesting to see how the campaign develops.

Lena R. Harknett
Centerport, N.Y.

Ms. Harknett is chairman of the New York State Right to Life Party.

Did panelists consult consensus promulgated in *Humanae Vitae*?

To the editor:

In response to a few of Mary Rose McCarthy's comments in the June 14 issue of the *Catholic Courier* under the title of "Forum aired differences in faiths' abortion views:" Did anyone refer to Pope Paul (VI)'s *Humanae Vitae*? I think within its contents many answers to a consensus on the issues of abortion and artificial birth control are mentioned.

I would assume these "separate parts of an orchestra" be in harmony with God to produce the cry of a newborn, not a stifled unborn, to create a beautiful symphony. It's very possible lay American Catholics would agree, there should be information

coming forth from the pulpit on these issues.

To say today's fathers are overworked, mothers overwhelmed, was also true for my husband and me. Still it didn't change the magisterial teachings. I don't believe it ever will. Was the subject of "Natural Family Planning" discussed at the forum? If not, why not?

If this was a parish-sponsored lecture, it's a shame it had to be held at Planned Parenthood offices — one of pro-life's biggest foes.

Rena B. Camblin
Palmyra

England sets 'cats' in conflict to maintain rule

To the editor:

After Oliver Cromwell had defeated the Irish Catholic Confederation, he established an English garrison at Kilkenny. Life was boring for the soldiers and they developed a "game" to provide excitement. They tied two Irish cats together by the tails and hung them over a line. The cats, struggling to free themselves, clawed and chewed each other to death.

This sadistic practice no longer uses cats. England now pits one religious group

against another so that they can continue to rule six Irish counties.

Should men of good will despair for peace and justice in Ireland? The answer of the martyred Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, was, "It is not to those who can inflict the most, but to those who can suffer most that victory comes."

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