

Penalty would end hopes of changing inmates' lives

To the editor:

Last Friday, I had two related but very different experiences. In the morning, I was saddened to read the angry and merciless view of John Starkweather on the death penalty.

In the evening, I was with a group of over 20 men and women who will be on a team presenting the first Residents Encounter Christ (program) at Attica Prison on August 7, 8, and 9. Three of those present were men who experienced a similar weekend when they were inmates at Auburn Prison or Orleans Correctional Facility.

If Mr. Starkweather had his way, at least one of these men would be dead today. Now he is going to witness to others what Christ has done for him and how his life has been changed by the love of Christ which was shown to him through His followers. He and another former inmate

on our team now have full-time jobs with Threshold in Rochester and counsel others in schools and in the office about drugs and other problems that can get them into trouble with the law.

God can work miracles through his followers who believe and exhibit the power of love. He can't work through hate or a spirit of vengeance. I hope and pray that others who may feel as Mr. Starkweather does will be touched in a way that over 500 of us, who have been directly involved with inmates as volunteers in prison ministry, have. Even if it were only a few inmates who were turned around in this way, it would be worth not having the death penalty. I'm convinced that Jesus would think so.

Father Bob Kreckel
St. Mary's of the Lake Church
Ontario, N.Y.

Ad conveyed profound message, but Teacher is already among us

To the editor:

I was delighted by the (advertising) message from the Catholic Diocese of Rochester which ended with the call to "Give Life a Chance." Most certainly no one knows whose womb bears what future gift to mankind or what plan God has for that unborn child.

however, I must comment that he "who will teach us to sit down in peace and break bread together, ... who will erase racial barriers, tear down walls (and) teach us to respect each other" was born two thousand years ago.

It is the teaching role of the Church to present this person Jesus Christ to us as present today and the answer to all these gut-wrenching problems. He is the Healer who can heal all our wounds and divisions. He is the Teacher who can tear down the walls of sin and ignorance that divide us and fuel the machines of greed, famine and war.

Surely our hearts yearn for someone to lead us in the ways of Christ-centered love, which is patient, kind and envies no one. He is here, he is among us. Let us all open our hearts and minds to him who is the Son of God, the Word made flesh. And let us welcome to birth all children conceived by man and woman and infused with an immortal soul by God, so they too may meet the risen Lord.

Leo J. Vetter Jr.
North Rose, N.Y.

Essentials of salvation revolve around compassion

To the editor:

Mr. Joseph Murray's letter in May recalled for me his letter in the *Democrat and Chronicle* during the Thanks Giving Appeal urging us to boycott the Bishop's call. Fortunately, a large part of the Catholic population ignored the urging.

Now he has difficulty with what he perceives as emphasis on "human development" rather than salvation. Salva-

tion is our individual responsibility. Our church has an obligation to lead, educate, support, etc. in our endeavor. I fail to understand why human development is incompatible with this goal.

Preoccupation with the concepts of Purgatory and of angels is not essential to salvation. This view does not deny their validity.

Of much more importance are the Ten

Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Nicene Creed and Jesus' teachings on love and compassion. The wonder of the Eucharist is not dimmed by theological arguments about the Real Presence.

Finally, as St. Paul said, (Corinthians I: Chapter 13) "and if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge and I have all faith so as to move mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing."

Leonard E. Edelman
Hilton

'Pro-life' label spans many issues

To the editor:

So often lately we read letters and articles by people stating they are pro-life because they are against abortion. Being against abortion is only one area of the Catholic Church's stand to be pro-life.

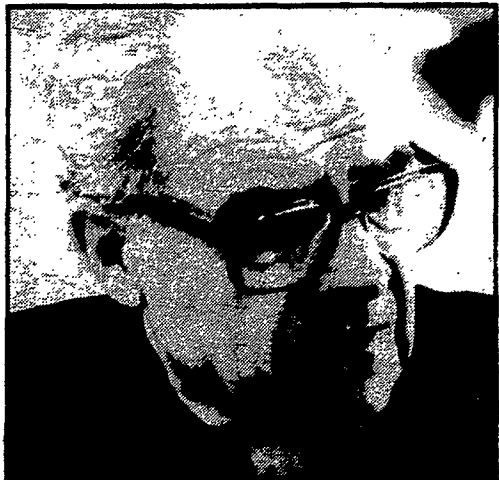
To be pro-life in the context of Catholic moral teaching is to oppose not only abortion but also capital punishment, poverty, sexism, racism and euthanasia. Any taking on downgrading of human life is morally unacceptable in the context of Catholic moral teaching.

If we disagree with any of these pro-life issues, we are contrary to Catholic moral

teaching. We should take the time as Catholics to read the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' document, "A Family Perspective in Church and Society," and the handbook, "Families at the Center." These documents can be obtained by writing for publications 337-X and 191-1 to the United States Catholic Conference Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005.

Denny and Shari Fischer
Buck Hill Road
Rochester

Role of women is most pressing issue today



File photo
Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen

To the editor:

I definitely agree with the Seattle Archbishop Raymond A. Hunthausen's announcement of cancelling plans to start a new class of deacons until women's rights and roles in the church are "more adequately addressed." This is the most pressing issue of the church these days, and some actions need to be taken. The Catholic Church must realize now that this is the '90s and women's roles in the church can't stay the same forever. We must expand on women's rights and roles in the church today because females should have equal rights as males, even in the church.

Erica Fee
Victor

Send writer packing

To the editor:

The *Catholic Courier* would do itself and its readers a favor if it said to John F. Starkweather of Rush "Here's your hat, what's your hurry."

His letter published in the *Courier* of June 14 places him well toward the top of the list of whom it can be said, "There, but for the Grace of God, goes God."

Richard T. Connolly
Seneca Parkway
Rochester

Make parolees learn Ten Commandments

To the editor:

As a boy, we went out to the sand lot to play baseball. The rules were always respected. As time goes on we think the Ten Commandments should be available to all.

The prison population continues to go up. Would it be too much to require a candidate for parole to be required to learn (the Commandments)? There is a lack of respect for what is right. Would that we could change! The state has adequate housing for half the people convicted of state prison offenses.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Has the time come to try?

John Coursey
Geneva

Catholic Courier Letters Policy

The *Catholic Courier* 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: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.