

# Christians, Americans abhor war against Iraq

To the editors:

For me, thou shall not kill is not a general guideline to be adhered to when convenient. It is a basic moral imperative deeply ingrained in my being. Nowhere in the teachings of Jesus do I find anything to support the opposition of one evil with another.

The American people are being falsely lead to believe that we are killing Iraqis to achieve justice for Kuwait when in reality we are playing the game "America, the boss of the world." Wars in Central America — El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama — plus the invasions of Grenada and Iraq and the bombing of Libya proclaim America to be perhaps the largest, wholesale purveyor of violence on the planet. Even our cities have become war zones of drug violence. Something is dreadfully wrong here.

It is extremely painful to come to the realization that your own country which fostered and nurtured you is responsible for some of the most unspeakable evil and suffering that this world endures. It is the duty of everyone who accepts the teachings of Jesus to oppose this outrage and call for-

th the love within them to triumph over this evil.

Contrary to what you may have heard in the media, there were nearly 100,000 such people in Washington on January 19th to show their opposition to the bombing and killing going on in our name in the Middle East. Jessie Jackson, Daniel Elsberg, Ramsey Clarke and many others spoke movingly about the need to focus our national attention away from war and toward the solving of our myriad human needs. The streets were choked with anti-war protesters of every age and color from Lafayette Park to the Smithsonian Mall. Hundreds of buses brought people from as far away as Kentucky and Wyoming — 175 buses from New York City alone. This clearly indicated to me that the majority of Americans do not support war. They are people of conscience, and people of conscience should speak out against killing.

God bless you and move your hearts with compassion.

John Kastner  
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Rochester



## Bush administration cut deals to get U.N. support

To the editors:

Here we go again. Another president — immoral, macho, a mad bomber — has taken the world to the brink of apocalypse. Unlike Johnson and Nixon, however, Bush has a patina of "legitimacy" provided by the United Nations. It is important to understand the bribery and coercion at the core of U.N. Resolution 678 authorizing war against Iraq.

Saul Friedman (Newsday, Dec. 7) wrote

that the 13-2 vote was produced by "an intensive, old-fashioned political campaign bolstered by contributions from wealthy friends in the Persian Gulf and marked by promises of money and favors to the other members of the Security Council. ...

"... Thus a day after Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced his support for the American resolution, he got a promise of \$4 billion in loans and aid from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States ... and

the United States is making plans to send food to the Soviets. Columbia, where (Secretary of State) Baker paid a hastily planned visit ... may soon get an increase in aid and approval to sell more of its flowers and sugar to the United States, said a State Department official."

The sleaziest aspects of the deal, though, transcend mere ward-heeling. Bush agreed to meet the Chinese foreign minister, a gesture calculated to absolve the Deng regime of the Tiananmen Square massacre, in exchange for China's abstention on the Security Council vote.

And, elevating extortion to global dimensions, Baker came to the U.N. with a \$189 million check for payment of back dues. The disobedient were punished too.

Yemen, which voted against the resolution, was told by a senior Bush official, "That was the most expensive no vote you ever made," referring to the U.S. cutting off \$70 million in aid to that country.

Due to the Security Council charade, Iraq's grievances were ignored. Iraq is certainly ruled by a brutal despot with a long record of aggression, bloodletting and suppression — largely supported by the United States and other imperial powers. Nonetheless, Iraq's historical claims and latter day complaints regarding Kuwait deserved a fair hearing before the bombs started dropping.

John E. Milich  
Ithaca

## Priests must inspire selflessness

To the editors:

Dear priests, as we celebrate the coming of Christ into our world dark with sin, teach and sanctify us. In an emasculated culture, teach us that unless Catholic men resume their role of spiritual leadership in the family and society and assume a spiritual masculinity, Christian families will slip further into the sins of the culture; divorce, adultery, and homosexuality will increase and the faith will continue to be eroded.

Teach us that the foundation of the sacrament of matrimony is charity. The husband's vocation to love his wife, and hers to honor him, are based on the Trinitarian model, and which resilient grace comes from there. Though affection, friendship, and eros all enter into marriage, a selfish eros-seeking is often the motive of infidelity. How many couples contemplating marriage are mature enough to know — still more to partake fully of that pseudo-spiritual love? Yet eros, as a spiritual form, cannot withstand the death of marriage and families which its ruthless pursuit can lead to. How many exemplary

and happy marriages have flourished on a less than perfect eros, and still radiated the light of Christ and His truth to numerous children, and a world greedy for more and more of the elusive pleasures of which eros is also a type.

Remind us that authentic self-esteem cannot be had apart from virtue. Pastoral approaches to reconciliation, insofar as they significantly de-emphasize culpability, preclude sinners from the union with God and their fellow from which true self-esteem flows. The wimpish approaches evident in recent years have failed to retain cradle Catholics or attract single-minded searchers. Perhaps the sports mania, the workaholicism and even the consumerism of our age are but strains of a love for excellence, which if not pursued in the life of the soul are manifested in children of lesser gods. Coaches are relentless in demanding premium performance, and their players are appreciative. Dear priests, urge us to go for *The God*. We and our loves will be appreciative.

Helen Ann Wagner  
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## Parents should put aside opposition to change and support Catholic schools reorganization

To the editors:

I am writing in reference to a letter by Ed Wurtz concerning the controversy over the reorganization of the Catholic schools (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 24: "Bishop deserves praise for leadership on schools"). I must say that I agree with Ed and I thought he stated his concerns very well.

As a parent who has had two children benefit by the Catholic school system, I see Catholic education as something that is very valuable and also as something that we must save at all costs. Whenever an issue involves a major change it is always painful for all of those involved, however it important that we look at the whole picture and not just at a small part of that picture. By doing so, as Ed stated, we endanger

what our original purpose was all about.

Perhaps those that oppose the plan should try to make an effort to understand why the reorganization has to take place. Each parish is not an entity unto itself, we are all part of the larger Christian community.

In a world besieged by war, fighting, hunger, poverty and misery I think that its time that we should be thinking in terms of how we can alleviate some of this suffering or better yet may be we could reflect on the words from the song:

"Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

Patricia A. Russo  
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## Government must take care of new veterans

To the editors:

At this moment, we have to pray for the care and safekeeping of our men and women who have been sent into harms way to Saudi Arabia, and for their families.

The American people must commit themselves to holding the political leaders who have sent our men and women into battle responsible for seeing to it that they have the very finest in medical care now and forever, that they have job opportunities, that they have educational opportunities, and that their families have a safe and secure future.

Those politicians who voted to send our

precious men and women into battle for all the wrong reasons have taken a blood oath to ensure that the sacrifices they have called on these families to make will never be forgotten.

It is a matter of record how our veterans have been abused over the years. Such practices must not be tolerated. American veterans are the very best who risked life and limb for all. They deserve the very best that America has to offer, and then some.

Susan Stehling  
Military Families Support Network  
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