

Bishop's commentary was refreshing insight

To the editors:

Bishop P. Francis Murphy's *Commonweal* article on the proposed pastoral on women was a breath of fresh air. Both the article itself and Jerry Filteau's



reporting about it (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 24 (from Catholic News Service): "Prelate: Justice demands ordaining women") afford the bishops some space to assess their efforts. Two thoughts!

1. The place of women in the church and specifically the question of women's ordination is not an issue that will just go away. Bishop Murphy suggests that the issue is as kernal to the doing of the faith as the question of admitting the Gentiles into the early Christian movement. He is correct and the point needs elaboration.

How we address this question runs to the integrity and the credibility of the Church as interpreter of the Gospel of Jesus. The question must be addressed out of obligation to the truth not because some ardent feminists are pressing it or because of a shortage of male celibate priests in the Latin rite. The issue is imperative because the light has gone on and a moment of insight into the meaning of the Gospel for all time henceforth is upon us, such as the moment of Paul's commissioning to be apostle to the Gentiles or the recognition in the U.S.A. that slavery was not the way of the Gospel.

This is a moment of profound conversion for all, a painful doing of the truth in love as Murphy avows. Many who hoped for this day will now humbly prepare their brothers and sisters to receive it. Indeed, many who see the light, even want the light, will resist. Many in power will feel threatened although fundamentalistic grappling for arguments from Scripture to maintain the status quo feed rather than diminish the threat.

2. Bishop Murphy correctly notes the role of the bishop in the local church to teach and the concurrent difficulty when local bishops find themselves in dissent from Rome. Church history knows of many examples of dissent from Rome. If one cannot dissent for fear of losing one's job, where goes doing the truth in love together? And what would be the value of claiming ordinary (local bishops) and universal (throughout the entire world) magisterium if an experience of the movement of the Spirit could not be adequately shared and communally discerned? Wouldn't it be profoundly sad if the U.S. bishops proceeded to publish a document on women engineered from Rome rather than a clear but pained speaking of the truth as the assembly of local churches in the U.S. have experienced it? Who can give assent to a forced confession? This is a moment of insight, even revelation, not only into the Gospel truth of women and men but also into the question of how we search the truth itself.

Father David Reid, SS.CC.
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Columbus reports his discovery to the king and queen of Spain.

Anniversary calls for efforts toward reconciliation, peace

To the editors:

The Roman Catholic Bishops of Central and Latin America (chose) October 12, Columbus Day, to meet and discuss the life of the Church and its people in their countries.

They (chose) Santo Domingo as the meeting location; the site of Columbus' first landing. Pope John Paul II celebrate(d) the Eucharist with them on that day to acknowledge the importance of the meeting and to commemorate five hundred years of Christian evangelization in the Americas.

The full religious, political and economic impact of the European entrance into the Americas is complex, and this complexity is being examined on many fronts today. It is clear, though, that the

European evangelization and colonization of the Americas resulted in death, destruction and oppression of peoples and cultures on an unprecedented level.

The gifts of the Church to the Americas in the spirit of evangelization are numerous and to be celebrated. What is also essential, though, is a recognition of the sins of the past five hundred years and a true effort towards reconciliation.

It is our hope that the Eucharist in Santo Domingo on Oct. 12 reflect(ed) this two-fold message, and that we will strive for peace and respectful relationships with all people in the future.

Christine Wagner, SSJ
for the Justice & Peace
Advisory Committee
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester



It's not easy to follow path of Jesus

To the editors:

I felt compelled to respond to the letter written by Stephanie Jones in the Sept. 24, 1992 issue, "Reader ponders relationship between religion and politics." Wonderful article; you could not have said it any better! I too, find this year's election and my beliefs tougher than ever to defend. Isn't it sad and terribly troubling that we are put on the defense? I know personally amongst my closest of friends and family members

— whom I thought once shared similar thoughts and values — that we are now on opposite ends in both, yes both our political views and our moral stands, as well.

Something is troubling me also in regards to Mr. Clinton and his "new covenant" statement. I will pray that in this year's election our Lord's will, will be done. I will also continue to pray for all of those — both young and old alike — who have decided to compromise on their true feelings and beliefs, just to pad their own lives and the lives of those who are dear to them. Yes, of course it would be much easier for any of us to choose this easier secular way, but I truly believe this is not what Jesus had intended for us. He did not say it was going to be easy for us to live his way, on the contrary. We must get back to basics and traditional values. How unfortunate that so many misinterpreted Mr. Quayle's statement, and chose to mock and ridicule this man nationally for something we all as Christians should stand for.

Sharon J. Petersheim
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Intolerance is shameful

To the editors:

It seems incongruous to me that while the *Catholic Courier* (Aug. 27) ran an article about the horrors of "ethnic cleansing" and Father McBrien wrote of the sin of racism, Father Shamon's column was a disturbing example of the equally shameful attitude of religious intolerance. This ignorance has resulted in untold deaths and suffering also.

Carol M. Kordish
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Many Catholics owe their lives to legacy of the Democratic Party

To the editors:

The assertion that the Republican Party is closer to views held by "good" Catholics has recently appeared in this paper.

It is true that on certain social issues, this may be the case. However, the historic link between our church and the Democrat Party should not be ignored.

The various immigrant Catholic groups were mostly poor and working class. In the face of organized discrimination from the Nativist, the Ku Klux Klan and other conservatives, our forebears formed a major faction of labor unions.

This American work force was greatly inspired and affirmed by Catholic

teachings concerning social justice.

There were times when unionists actually sought refuge from violence in their local parish. When the Depression struck, an electorate that included so many Catholics, rose to leadership toward rendering services that we tend to take for granted today. The highwater mark of the Catholic vote in this century was the Kennedy Presidency.

There is a great irony that a part of the Catholic-Democrat legacy has included legal abortion. But there are other aspects of the legacy to which many of us owe our very lives.

Stephen M. Clary
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Mumford

Gov. Clinton wants the Catholic vote?

To the editors:

After reading the Oct. 15 column by Father McBrien, several thoughts come to mind. In the column, he says that Gov. Clinton wants the Catholic vote. If this is so, he is going about it in a very strange way.

First, Gov. Clinton is against tax vouchers for parents of Catholic and all parochial schools. President Bush has always been in favor of this, and at great political risk to himself. The reason it has not passed is because it has always been opposed by the National Education Association, which always lobbies Congress against it — and the NEA is now supporting Mr. Clinton.

The second thing is that, after speaking at Notre Dame, Mr. Clinton went out to California and, while speaking to a wildly cheering group of pro-choice women, reiterated his pro-abortion stance ...

... If all this is supposed to be a "new sensitivity to Catholic voters," then I think this is a very curious way of showing it! People should consider these things before voting; our future may depend upon it!

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EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with our letters policy.