

Catholic Courier

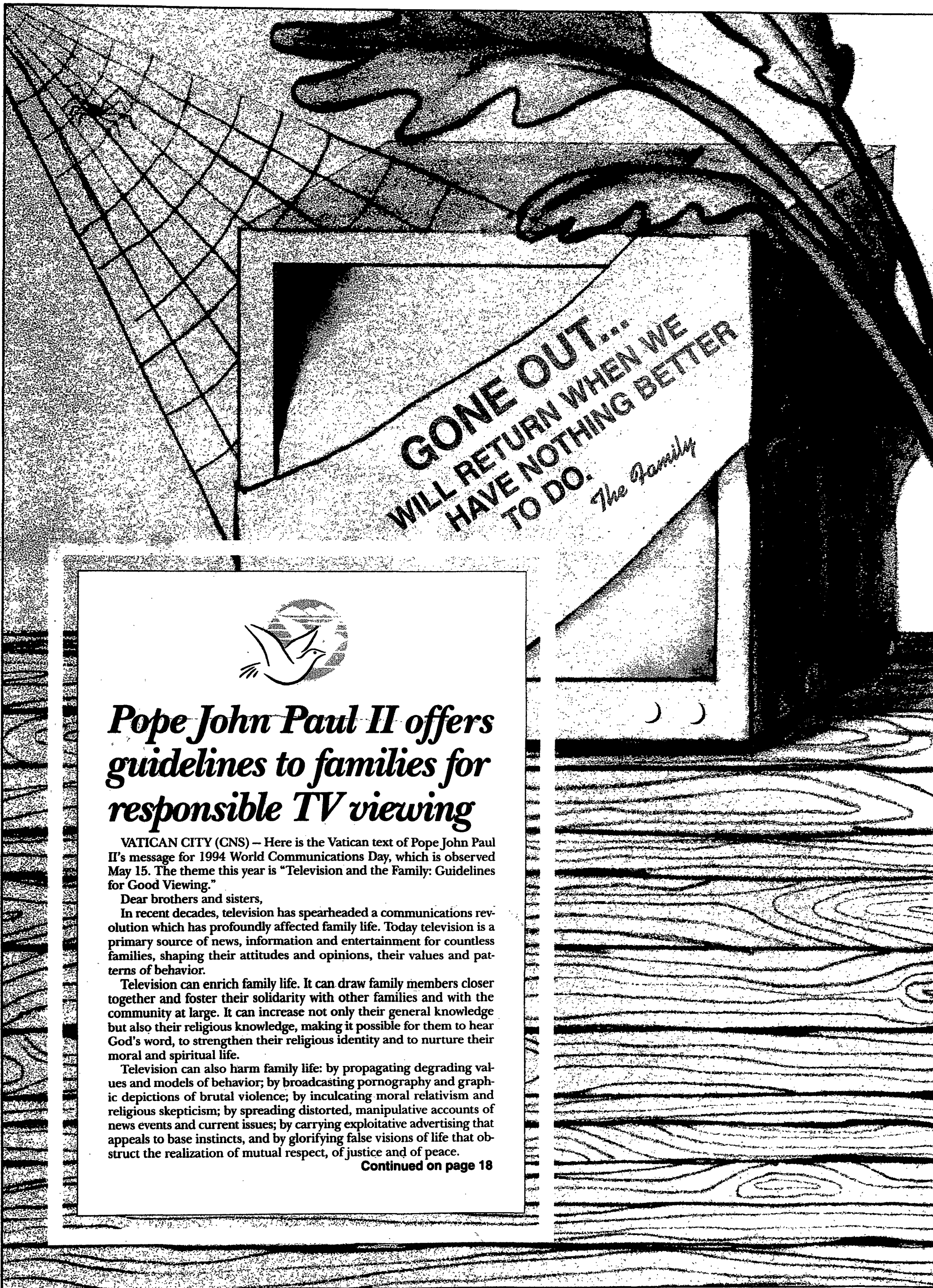
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

VOL. 105 NO. 30

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1994

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20 PAGES



Pope John Paul II offers guidelines to families for responsible TV viewing

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Here is the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's message for 1994 World Communications Day, which is observed May 15. The theme this year is "Television and the Family: Guidelines for Good Viewing."

Dear brothers and sisters,

In recent decades, television has spearheaded a communications revolution which has profoundly affected family life. Today television is a primary source of news, information and entertainment for countless families, shaping their attitudes and opinions, their values and patterns of behavior.

Television can enrich family life. It can draw family members closer together and foster their solidarity with other families and with the community at large. It can increase not only their general knowledge but also their religious knowledge, making it possible for them to hear God's word, to strengthen their religious identity and to nurture their moral and spiritual life.

Television can also harm family life: by propagating degrading values and models of behavior; by broadcasting pornography and graphic depictions of brutal violence; by inculcating moral relativism and religious skepticism; by spreading distorted, manipulative accounts of news events and current issues; by carrying exploitative advertising that appeals to base instincts, and by glorifying false visions of life that obstruct the realization of mutual respect, of justice and of peace.

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