

# OPINIONS

## Jonesboro shows what young learn

### EDITORIAL

The nation was horrified March 24 when two boys — one 13, the other 11 — were arrested for killing four students and a teacher at Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Ark.

Apparently, the two pulled the school's fire alarm, then shot at students and teachers as they evacuated the building. Early accounts suggested that the 13-year-old was angry at some girls who had rejected his romantic intentions.

The killings come in the wake of similar recent incidents. Last Dec. 15, for example, a 14-year-old shot and killed two fellow students at Stamps High School in Stamps, Ark. On Dec. 1, a 14-year-old boy shot into a student prayer group at the high school in West Paducah, Ky., killing three. And on Oct. 1, a 16-year-old killed his mother, then shot and killed two students in Pearl, Miss.

Ironically, these incidents have occurred even as overall juvenile violent crime rates have fallen.

Pundits have busily debated the Jonesboro boys' alleged actions. They have trotted out the usual suspects: guns (and the need for gun control); the effects of divorce; lack of parental control; abuse (indeed, reports now indicate that one of the boys may have been sexually abused); and violence on television, movies and video games.

Thus far, however, no clear explanations have emerged concerning what happened in Jonesboro.

But when one considers some other news items from the same period, something of a pattern emerges.

The day before the Jonesboro shootings, convicted killer Gerald Eugene Stano was executed in Florida.

That same day, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to take on a case that could have limited partial-birth abortion.

And on the very day of the shootings, an 80-year-old woman

became the first person to die legally by assisted suicide under Oregon's Death with Dignity Act.

In his 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II spoke prophetically of this growing "culture of death."

He noted that the weak and defenseless have become targets of increasing violence "in the name of the rights of individual freedom."

He observed that the circumstances under which the death penalty is justified are "very rare if not practically nonexistent."

He pointed out that growing acceptance of euthanasia and abortion, in particular, have darkened and conditioned our consciences, making "it increasingly difficult to distinguish between good and evil in what concerns the basic value of human life."

Through our culture's acceptance of the death penalty, euthanasia and abortion as solutions to various problems, we are teaching our children that violence is acceptable. In some cases, they themselves are the victims of the virtual worship of the "rights of individual freedom" — a supposed right that places the wants and desires of the individual above the needs of others, including our children.

Tragically, it appears some troubled youths have simply built on the lessons they have been taught.

Indeed, Luke Woodham, the 16-year-old charged in the Pearl, Miss., slayings, explained his actions by declaring, "The world has wronged me, and I couldn't take it anymore."

Perhaps fewer individuals would see violence as a solution to wrongs inflicted by society if we heeded the pope's advice: "Society as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment in every condition of that person's life."

### Catholic Courier

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### 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 original, signed 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 letter writers' opinions.

Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

## Add another title to litany of Our Lady

#### To the editors:

Back in the '20s as a pupil at (Auburn's) St. Mary's parochial school third grade, Sister Leo, SSJ, prayed the litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary regularly to us — from memory. Amazed that she could remember such a lengthy prayer without reading it from a prayer book, I considered her to be superhuman.

Of late years I often have reminisced about this and noticed that the part of the litany which refers to Our Lady as Queen of Angels, Saints, Martyrs, Confessors, etc. did not include a title which I consider to be most important. I have never seen or read Our Lady addressed as Queen of Love. If I am wrong, I stand to be corrected.

Why Queen of Love? Jesus her son, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, the triune God, is love. I further believe the virtue of love is more powerful than all the other virtues combined. Once we have the virtue of love in our hearts, all the other virtues will become a part of us. Love is the key!

Since Jesus, the son of Mary, is love, it seems only natural that his mother, Our Blessed Lady, is the Queen of Love — and should be included along with her many other "loving" titles.

In conclusion may I present the readers four lines which came to me Jan. 14, 1995. The words are not original. They are from Scriptures and other religious readings selected via the hunt and pick method.

To give is to love.

To love is to give.

To forgive is to love.

To love is to forgive.

With love in our heart we will have inner peace, peace in the family and peace in the world. No cost!

Ask and you shall receive.

Seek and you shall find.

Knock and it shall be opened unto you. God will provide!

Much, love and peace to everyone.

God bless.

Here it comes, "I love you!" Now, I feel much better!!

Francis Mastropietro  
Clark Street, Auburn



## Foreign clergy deserve our respect

#### To the editors:

Plaudits to Bishop Moynihan of Syracuse for discontinuing (Fr.) Richard McBrien's weekly column in the diocesan paper. McBrien's criticism of employing foreign clergy in the (U.S.) not only has an acrid scent of racism, but is an affront to all foreign priests serving in the States, intimidating either they are not properly trained or somehow lack class and status.

I have traveled throughout North America and have been fully and competently serviced, whether by a Philippine in California, a Mexican in New Mexico, or a Pole on the Caribbean Island of Nevis.

At Holy Cross Parish in Rochester, we have the good fortune of being assigned

Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu from Africa as our Parochial Vicar. Fr. Peter is loved and respected by all. ... I find him to be fully conversant on Theological issues and un-intimidated by American culture.

Following McBrien's logic, English-speaking countries should cease supplying clergy to foreign missions where native priests are in short supply.

Behind his thinly disguised comments, I detect arrogant attitude toward the respect and reverence for traditional church teaching held by foreign clergy in contrast to McBrien's hostility toward Rome in general and the Pope in particular.

James R. Boehler  
Lakeshire Rd., Rochester

## Urges support of Family Rosary for Peace

#### To the editors:

The Family Rosary for Peace is aired on WWVG on the radio every night at 6:30.

It was started by Monsignor Joseph A. Cirrincione after he was miraculously cured of two big health problems through the help of Our Blessed Mother. He thanked her at Fatima!

Try listening and taking part in it. It covers a wide geographic area including nearby Canada. It's a wonderful thing your fam-

ily can take part in together. It is supported solely by the listening audience.

Msgr. Cirrincione recorded it with nuns, and it is done enthusiastically with lots of vigor and pep!

The address for sending money to support this great program is: WWVG, Box 1107, Rochester, NY 14611. It's your chance to help our world become a better place!

Mary Rita Crowe  
East Main Street, Rochester

## Oppose abortion at all times, especially in third trimester

#### To the editors:

Abortion should be opposed at all times especially in the third trimester.

Here, when a child is aborted it suffers unbelievable pain, and what if its arm or legs are severed off and it lives?

I know what liberals will say. They will

say if the procedure is performed correctly this will not happen. What they are really saying is that the child will be killed outright! If you're going to do this, then why not simply let the baby be born, then kill it?

John Nawrocki  
West Main Street, Rochester