

the Seminarian

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WHEN WILL THE KILLING END?

This article was written for publication in my father's parish newsletter approximately six weeks ago, but I withheld publication in deference to firearm enthusiasts in our rural parish, as well as gun owners here at Seminary. I now realize what a cowardly act that was, and as such I shall not remain silent any longer.

Mark Schlichter

To my mind the most senseless and obscene aspect of the recent John Lennon murder is the fact that violent deaths such as these occur every hour of every day in this country, and we as a people do nothing about it. Surely it is our duty as Christians to stand up and shout "Enough!" The United States is the "laughing stock of the world" for its easy access to guns. Editorial comment from around the world regarding Lennon's murder relates the sad fact that "it could only happen in America."

Let me clarify my position before proceeding. In all our conversation regarding "guns", we must differentiate between handguns (Saturday night specials, pistols, and other easily concealed firearms operated with one hand) and rifles and shotguns (legitimate weapons for hunting and possibly self-defense). I have nothing against the possession and legal use of rifles and shotguns. I do not, however, feel the general public should be entitled to unrestricted purchase and possession of small and easily concealed firearms, i.e. handguns. I believe that unrestrained availability of handguns, combined with their inconspicuous but deadly nature, leads to their illegal use and flagrant abuse. The 12,000 handgun murders last year in this country would seem to attest to this belief.

Let us penetrate our callousness for a moment and try to appreciate this figure of 12,000 yearly handgun murders. This means that last week, assuming it was a "typical" week in our country, over 200 people were shot to death. That is one handgun killing about every 40 minutes. In all probability, as you picked up this newspaper someone in the US was brutally murdered with a gun. If you are an average reader, as you finish reading this publication another human being (created in the image of God, by God) was shot with a handgun and lay bleeding to death as you returned the newsletter to the coffee table. I, for one, cannot stifle my conscience on this matter.

The sad fact is that over one half of the gunshot victims die due to an accident or argument. Nearly 75% of the victims knew their assailant. Their deaths occurred primarily because the gun was available and/or concealable. The old saying that "guns don't kill people, people kill people" is certainly misleading if not totally erroneous. People with guns kill people. Without guns people are much less likely to kill one another, especially passionately or accidentally. If a gun is within reach, however, a person quite possibly may kill somebody (or himself), especially if that person is an untrained novice, such as urban dwellers, housewives, children, etc.

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KILLING Cont.

Availability increases utilization; water consumption per household increased dramatically when piped-in water became available, the frequency of surgery rises significantly as the number of surgeons increases, etc. Thus, as handguns proliferate (from 50 million in the seventies to an estimated 90 million in the late eighties) we can expect a continued rise in the number of handgun murders.

It is a sad commentary of the state of affairs in this country when the First Lady, Mrs. Reagan, legitimizes handgun possession by stating she has a "little-bitty gun". The conspicuous silence of the newly powerful "Christian right" is also most disheartening in my opinion. They seem to be afraid to take an unpopular stand with their constituency, but in doing so they betray their duty and confession as Christians. Christ chose the path that led inexorably to the Cross, and we who bear His name as Christians must likewise pursue the sometimes difficult or unpopular reforms that lead to greater love, brotherhood and faith among humankind.

When will the killing end?

Mark Schlichter

ARTS ENSEMBLE CHAPEL

On Wednesday, April 8 during Chapel, the Arts Ensemble will present an original dramatic adaptation of "The Salvation of Zachary Baumkletterer", a short story about an individual who takes his commitment to Christ very seriously, perhaps too seriously. The presentation will last approximately 30 minutes and will be followed by a time for discussion and sharing for those who are interested. All are invited to attend. The Ensemble would like to thank Dean Hartley's collegium for allowing us to fit into their plans.

The Arts Ensemble

PAINTING OF THE WEEK

Charles F. McCauley, who is he, why isn't he smiling, and what is that under his chin? These are some of the questions that have come up about our first painting of the week. After much research I have come up with the following.

This research proved very enlightening, and I uncovered many myths and unknowns and a lot of confusion surrounding this man. It wasn't until I talked to our curator, Brother Jay, that I gained true insight into this man. It seems that Charles was the goalie for the LTS ice hockey team back in the early days of the school. On the day his painting was done, the LTS SAINTS had a big game, and Charles played goalie. After the game he quickly changed and posed for his portrait. He rushed so fast that he forgot to take off part of his equipment, his neck protector. Yes under his chin is the latest in neck protection for goalies. This also explains why he isn't smiling, he let a goal in and lost the game for the SAINTS. Well, the mystery is solved.

I want to thank all those who gave their ideas, such as: The painter was on acid, Charles forgot to shave that morning, that part of the painting is an abstract, the painting is so old it is growing mold, and Charles is so old he's growing a mold. Thank you for your help, our next feature painting will be ??????

Le Critic d'Art

COMMUTER COLLEGIUM?

I would like to contact other commuters who find the expense of gas and time for Collegium on Wednesdays when so few classes are offered a great burden. Are there enough of us to form a group on another day?

Mary Lou Green

SISYPHUS THE CHRIST (part 1)

I'm sure by now my fascination with the mythical figure of Sisyphus has appeared to have exploded into a full-blown obsession. You are no doubt wondering what it is about this absurd and hapless individual that is so interesting and provocative, and why it seems to haunt and badger me at the deepest level of my faith. It is quite easily explained. The fact is, I know this man personally. So do you.

Sisyphus was the legendary King of Corinth who was sentenced by the gods to spend eternity in the infernal region, endlessly toiling to roll a huge stone to the top of a steep hill. Each time the pinnacle was reached, however, the rock was invariably repulsed by some sudden force and would careen down the slope, coming to rest on the plain below. With the dawn would come the renewal of the task, with the dusk would come the torturous collapse of the day's effort. In this fashion, Sisyphus spends the rest of time.

But what of us? What is the point? Like many myths, the tale of Sisyphus derives its impact and power from its ability to inform humanity about itself, its identity, its nature and/or destiny. Let us consider the significant features of the myth at hand in an attempt to extract that which can provide insight into our common existence. For Sisyphus, there are four features of his condemnation which are essential and immutable: The rock, the slope, the sentence, and the choice. There is the object which defines his existence, the focus of his energies and being, the rock. There is the opponent, the obstacle, the antagonist, the challenge; the slope. There is the yoke which binds him to the burden, the chain of commitment; the sentence. And there is the dawn, and with it the decision; to sit idle or to push. In a very real sense, Sisyphus is cursed with freedom. It is he who must fuse his energy to the rock, it is he who must bear the stench of his expense, and it is he who must decide to submit in obedience to his judges or to sit in defiance of their decree.

The plight of Sisyphus is, in my opinion, beautifully analogous to the situation of one who claims himself to be a Christian. For the follower of Jesus, the four features of Sisyphus' condemnation are all too familiar. There is the unconditional agape of the divine made incarnate in Jesus that towers before us, requesting the focus of our energies and being. There is the ever-steepening slope of indifference and injustice. There is the yoke of faith which binds us to the monolith and the demand for participation which calls us to "lay hold of the rock and push". And there is the dawn and with it the requirement for decision; to sit idle or to push. In essence, our plight as a Christian is parallel to that of Sisyphus except for one very important feature; motivation, i.e., the reason why we push.

Ron Parks

POSITION AVAILABLE

The position of Editor-in-Chief of the Seminarian for the 1981-1982 school year will be vacant unless an interested student chooses to take over the position. Many of us appreciate the newspaper and find its input valuable. I cannot commit myself to another year of editorship, as I feel it is important to bring new life and new editorial policy to this publication. I am willing to train the person who chooses to assume the responsibility for next year's publication, and would encourage this person to become involved with the last few issues of this year, to help understand how much of a time commitment is involved. Thank you.

Don Mason

NEWS FROM ST. JAMES CHURCH

POLICY

A trio of prominent local instrumentalists will assist organist Frank A. McConnell in presenting the Lenten Organ Recital at St. James Episcopal Church, Duke and Orange Streets, Lancaster, on Saturday April 4, at 4:00 p.m.

Stefan Ochs, cellist, will solo in Sonata in G by the early 18th century violinist/composer Henry Eccles and will join Emma Herr, clarinetist, to play Concertpiece Number 2 by Mendelssohn. Ochs and Herr are members of the Lancaster Symphony Orchestra.

John Hamilton, making a rare appearance as a violist, will join Miss Herr and Mr. McConnell to present a Trio for clarinet, viola and clavier by Mozart. Hamilton and Herr are members of the Musical Arts Society.

Solo organ offerings include "We thank Thee, God" by Bach and Two Antiphons by Dupre.

At the final recital in the series, April 11, guest artists Phyllis Widlake, soprano, and Ethelmae McSparren, Harpsichordist, will perform numbers by Mozart and J. S. Bach.

The public is invited to these programs and there is no charge.

Frank A. McConnell

One advantage of having the Communicator in hand when writing this paper, is that one may make immediate response to the contents of that publication, as I am doing right now. I call your attentions to the opening paragraphs in the regular column: From the President's Office.

Now we cannot say that we have no opportunity to provide input into the policy making around here. We are invited to make any suggestions to any member of the Executive Cabinet- Glasse, Nordbeck, Fogal, Waddell, Hartley, Wolfe- regarding the current policies which are being followed by the seminary Administration. I, for one am going to write up a statement about parking policy, and make some recommendations about changing the stated policy. Some of you may be concerned about other areas of administration. (For example, maintenance and security fall under the realm of administrative policy) I must remind you, however, that the Executive Cabinet is not that interested in your complaints, they are interested in your suggestions as to how to effect adequate changes in the policy statements already in force.

Please, let's all take this opportunity to make some concrete suggestions as to how the policy statements of the administration can more closely address our student needs.

Don Mason

