

opinion/editorial

Parole for assassins not true justice

Recent stories discussing the possibility of parole for Sirhan Sirhan may make one stop and think about the kind of world we live in.

Sirhan, the convicted killer of Robert F. Kennedy, is scheduled to be paroled Sept. 1, 1984. But while the law may allow his parole at that time, it certainly would not be justice.

For on the night of June 5, 1968, Sirhan committed the most demoralizing crime a country can face — the assassination of a political figure.

The crime Sirhan committed was more than a violation of any state or federal law. It was a violation of the political process and against every member of the human race.

When Sirhan shot Bobby Kennedy, his bullets became more powerful than all the ballots cast that day in the California primary.

And when balloting through the democratic process is replaced by some nut with a gun, we all lose. It strikes at our very soul because it removes

a leader with ideas, who if elected, might help to make the world become, as the late Harry Chapin wrote in a song, "a better place to be."

But, Robert Kennedy's assassination is not the only example of this lunacy called political assassinations.

Americans can reflect on periods in their lives just by recalling who was the latest victim of an assassination attempt.

Whether it be President Kennedy in 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968 or the most recent death of John Lennon and the attempts on the lives of President Reagan or Pope John Paul II, Americans have all been touched by a madman with a gun.

Does the public want men like Sirhan Sirhan out of jail? Do we want to allow the James Earl Rays, Arthur Bremer, Squeaky Frommes and Mark David Chapman of society to return to normal lives? No.

The rationale for liberating a person who so

grossly may have altered the course of history is mystifying.

The assassinations we have grown accustomed to raise concerned citizens to a feverish pitch when "their" favorite is mentioned.

And there are many people who oppose capital punishment but would be willing to flip the switch on the electric chair if it meant removing one of these perpetrators from society.

Talk concerning Sirhan Sirhan has involved jail-yard rumors that he has threatened to shoot Edward Kennedy, if he should ever become president.

But, it is the crime Sirhan committed 13 years ago that should earn him a stay at Soledad Prison for the rest of his life, not idle gossip.

Let's hope Los Angeles County District Attorney John Van de Kamp's efforts to make Sirhan a permanent resident of the California penal institution are successful. It would set an ideal precedent for future cases.



Liberal Catholics out-foxing, out-talking the Conservatives

Newsweek's religious section features a flattering profile of David Tracy, one of those modish Catholic theologians whom *Newsweek's* religion editor can be counted on to puff, in that he finds learned reasons for disregarding papal authority, while espousing politics somewhere to the left of wherever we are now.

Joseph Sobran

The genre is all too predictable. One whiff of it, and Helen Keller could probably guess where Tracy would stand on birth control, El Salvador and the whale.

Sure enough, we read that when a conservative parish men's group asked Tracy for a little talk on Communism — back when it was still permissible to regard Communism as evil — that Tracy foxed them good. He delivered a homily on "The Christian Marxist Dialogue" — "dialogue" being what liberals prefer to have with Marxists, "Marxists" being what liberals prefer to call Communists.

Conservative Catholics have formed a bad habit of being out-foxed by equivocating liberals, and the *Newsweek* article is only a tiny tile in the great mosaic. Liberals have a code all their own; it has served them far better than straight talk, which would have been fatal to them.

In Charleston, W.Va., the other day, I listened to a priest deliver a sermon on "tolerance," and somehow I knew there would be trouble. In due course the mass

culminated in a Communion service that violated every recent papal directive, with laymen distributing the Eucharist under the forms of both bread and wine.

The conservative parishoners accepted it all meekly, since "tolerance" is what they are to bestow on others, not expect for themselves. It is unlikely that many of them knew, for instance, of the case of Cornelius Buckley, the California Jesuit who has been silenced by his liberal superiors for criticizing his liberal colleagues.

Father Buckley discovered the limits of liberal tolerance. He would have avoided trouble by declaring himself a Marxist.

What if a Catholic accepts the Pope's authority? That, after all, used to be the meaning of calling one's self a Catholic, which is why their enemies called Catholics "papists". At least in those days the lines of division were clear.

Today the struggle goes on within the church, under false labels. The Catholic who wants to worship according to papal and traditional rites hardly knows where to turn.

This situation is deeply baffling, as well as troubling, to traditional Catholics. Their words, symbols and rituals are being snatched from them and invested with novel meanings, often of substance more political than religious. They wonder why those who reject Roman authority don't simply abandon the Roman church; they also realize that if that church is destroyed, they, who can't go anywhere else, will be homeless forever.

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Written advice for princess

A friend sent me a letter in early August wishing me a happy birthday and reminding me I was not the same age as the new Princess of Wales, Diana.

With the pre- and post-wedding blitz on the "telly," I hardly needed a reminder that she has caught a rich one and I have not.

Granted, Diana and I have little in common besides the mutual age of 20. I dare not make comparisons between her royal life and my peasant one. But, the princess' blood is only newly blue and she can still benefit from a bit of advice from the common folk.

patti gallagher

Therefore, what follows is an open letter to her highness, the future Queen of Britain, with a few tips on getting along with Charlie and the royal family.

Dear Cinderella,

So, the party's over, eh? Geez, you two kids sure know how to throw a party. I wasn't there (the invitation never came; you know about our American postal service, I presume), but I watched it all on TV and read the accounts in the paper. Some big deal.

I'm writing, your Princess Waleness, to give you some post wedding tips. Please do not take offense; I'm only trying to help. Being 20 myself and having had some experience with stubborn men, you may find the following helpful:

1. Next time around, wait a while. I mean, your first weekend with the prince (remember the Scotland castle in September 1979?) was less than a year ago, the engagement was just announced in February and the wedding was July 29. That's rushing things a bit. Well, what's done is done. Let's hope it works out.

2. Trim the guest list. Di, the ceremony was a tad large. I know the Britains went bonkers for all the pomp and ceremony, but it really was excessive. Next time, cut the guest list in half and let them all come including Nancy Reagan — to the marriage breakfast. I really think our president's wife was insulted that she had to eat with Margaret Thatcher.

3. Clean out your closet. Di, it's obvious you're stuck in the middle about what to wear. I hate to be judgmental, but at times you dress as maternally as Charles' mother. The blue suit with the crooked tie at the neck (the one in all the first PR shots)? Get rid of it. It adds 10 pounds and 10 years.

And the riding outfit? The sweater with little stickmen and sailboats is silly, the brown cords look cheap and the high rubber boots that look avante-garde in British teen magazines definitely do not befit a princess.

My advice: Quit fighting between dressing the little girl and the royal lady. Get yourself a closet full of tailored suits. Charge them to Charlie. He can afford it.

4. As long as we're talking about dressing, I heard you plan on wearing flat shoes so the prince won't look short. Girl, I'd give my eye teeth to be 5-foot-9-inches. Flaunt it. Wear spikes if you feel like it. Chuck's ego can't handle a few inches, what kind of king is he going to make anyway? Besides, he can't expect you to wear loafers with your fancy evening gowns.

5. Donate the gifts to charity. Really, I was ashamed that you two could accept more than \$1 million worth of wedding gifts. You probably got twelve dozen blenders. All those British people starving in the streets might appreciate a couple jewels or pieces of furniture. Better yet, cash in the stuff and buy them some tea and crumpets.

6. Get away from the in-laws. Look, it's obvious you and the prince are itching to get into those royal throne chairs. But the queen is only 55 and she's got at least 20 more years of ruling in her. So go rent a flat, something nice, and let her get it out of her system. Your turn will come soon enough.

7. Get a job. Diana, seriously, you can't be the man's shadow. You need a life of your own. Go teach kindergarten again, or at least do some of your own charity work. Remember, you two omitted the word "obey" from your wedding vows. Stick to it. Don't let him boss you around. You're Diana, Princess of Wales, not Mrs. Prince Charles. Prove it.

Take care and ta ta. Give my love to the family.

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