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Editorial Comment

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Editorial Comment

A year ago Father William F. Cahill became the Editor of *The Catholic Lawyer*. During the all too brief period of his editorship, those who assisted him in this office were able to appreciate fully the rare privilege of association with true scholarship. The tremendously significant articles which he contributed in the area of morality in legal practice may well serve as landmarks for all future writing on the topic. The wide range of his knowledge made him equally expert in common law as well as canon law. Coupled with this legal acumen, his thorough understanding of philosophy and moral theology made him invaluable in the position he held. While his return to the service of the Diocese of Albany is no doubt an occasion of rejoicing on the part of those whom he joins, his departure has saddened his former associates and has created a void which will be difficult to fill.

In assuming the editorship of *The Catholic Lawyer* I well recognize that I am the first layman to be entrusted with this responsibility. My predecessors, Father Joseph Tinnelly and Father William Cahill, worked long and arduously to establish high standards for the guidance of those who undertake the task of continuing this publication. It is my fervent hope that their work will not prove to have been in vain.

With respect to the current issue, reader response to the two-part symposium on punishment recently featured in *The Catholic Lawyer* has inspired the articles on capital punishment which appear on the following pages. In 1957 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts appointed a special committee to investigate capital punishment and make recommendations to the Massachusetts legislature concerning its retention or abolition. The majority report of the committee, submitted in December 1958, recommended that capital punishment be abolished. A significant excerpt from this report has been chosen for publication by the advisors because it contains an excellent summary and explanation of the current arguments against the retention of capital punishment.

The Most Reverend Thomas J. Riley, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, who was a member of this special committee, dissented from the majority report. At the request of the Editor, he has written an article for this issue which explains his dissent, and details the arguments for the retention of capital punishment which, in his opinion, outweigh those contained in the majority report.

We who are charged with continuing the St. Thomas More Institute and *The Catholic Lawyer* very much need, and earnestly solicit, the help of the advisors and readers of the magazine. An occasional kind word is a courtesy we appreciate, but that is not the sort of help we most urgently require. Unless we receive definite criticism of the magazine's contents, and specific suggestions of subjects for study and of approaches to those subjects, we cannot shape the magazine to the readers' needs and interests. Especially, we ask from the readers material for and comment upon the continuing departments in which are discussed moral problems in legal practice and projects for Catholic lawyers' guilds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Fagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

EDITOR