

Bishop Urges Anti - Abortion Campaign

My dear People:

Two years ago, New York State ratified a law that has already permitted the abortion of 300,000 unborn children — one child killed every three minutes. This wholesale destruction of unborn human life presents us as citizens of our state with a serious moral decision: can we in conscience permit this slaughter to go on, or must we not again and again speak out against it? The answer is clear!

The beginning of pregnancy is the beginning of a human life separate from that of the Mother. On the very first day of conception the color of the baby's eyes, skin and hair is established, part of the child's unique genetic endowment. Twenty-eight days later the child's own heart is beating. As early as the eighth week his brain is actively producing recordable brain waves. At the end of twelve weeks the baby is completely formed: no new organs will develop; it remains only for this fragile creature of God to grow larger and more perfect. From conception on, there is no point at which the living being in the mother's womb is not a human being. And yet

the law allows this innocent unborn human child to be killed.

The possible consequences of legalized abortion are staggering! If innocent human life can be legally snuffed out in its early stages, what is wrong with taking innocent human life later on? What protection is left for the handicapped, the retarded, the mentally ill, the aged? These matters are seriously being discussed by some people and they are actually debating the questions: "Who shall live — and who decides?"

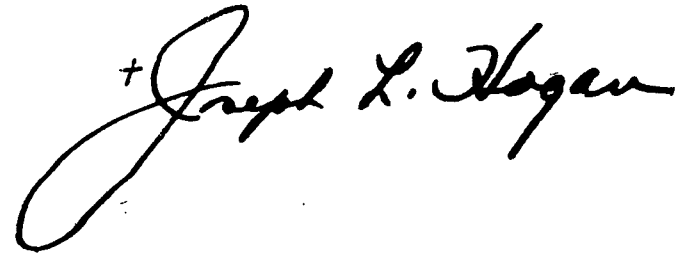
There is only one moral answer, written by God Himself deep in the heart of man. It is echoed in the words of our own Declaration of Independence: "... all men are created equal, . . . they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights" — and the first right of every human being is the right to life.

The sacredness of unborn human life is not just the concern of any one religious group. It is a basic moral concern for all citizens. And our respect for the life of the unborn should encourage all of us to raise a mighty shout of protest against the legalized destruction of life by abortion.

We urge you as strongly as we can to oppose and reject abortion. We plead with you to recognize the terrible consequences of legalized abortion for our society.

We ask you to cooperate with programs initiated in your communities and in your parishes to remove this tragic law. Information is readily available on the ways in which you can join with other men and women of good will in local community groups to make your position clear to elected leaders and to insist on an end to the killing of unborn infants in our State.

Devotedly yours in Christ,



Bishop of Rochester
and the

Catholic Bishops of New York State



Hear the Ocean?

Photo by Laurence E. Keefe

Officer Jim Hughes can testify that visiting first grade can be a tough assignment for a policeman. All the boys and girls at St. Boniface scrambled for

his attention. Here Joey Bertino shares the sound of the ocean with him. For more on what's happening in classrooms these days turn to centerfold.

President Promises School Aid . . . But

Philadelphia — Though President Nixon last week told Catholic educators that he is "irrevocably committed" to aid to nonpublic schools, two other factors cast a cloud over the hopes for such assistance.

One of these was a decision by a three-judge U.S. court that declared unconstitutional a Pennsylvania law that would have reimbursed parents for tuition in nonpublic schools. The aid violated a constitutional separation of state and church, the court said.

The law had been passed after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down last June a 1968 Pennsylvania law that provided aid to nonpublic schools through purchase of educational services.

The same Supreme Court decision led to the voiding of a New York State law that provided assistance through the Secular Educational Services (Continued on Page 2)

Special Section on Abortion

Abortion is apparently a taboo subject with the State Legislature this year. With all lawmakers worrying ahead to November elections, any such explosive issue will meet with planned indifference.

Abortion repeal measures, however, have been introduced and committees are keeping them from a full vote in the Legislature. Right to life groups across the state feel that repeal would stand a good chance of passing a full legislative hearing.

In cooperation with the State Catholic Committee, the Courier-Journal this week is running a special four-page section citing the two years of degradation New York State has had under the recent abortion law. How to petition for change is also explained in this special section.

On Page 3, Bishop Hogan continues his series on the Easter message for all of us throughout the year. It is a "message of hope", the bishop writes. We feel it is a significant teaching for all our readers.

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