

Bishop Calls for Conference on Unborn



'My Old Teacher'

Photo by Laurence E. Keefe

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan greets an old teacher from his school days, Sister Lucinda Gilmartin, SSJ, at a Eucharistic League Holy Hour he led Sept. 11 at St. Joseph's convent infirmary. Pushing Sister Lucinda's chair is Sister Blanche McGrath, SSJ, with Sister Leona LeFrois, SSJ in the background. Another of the Bishop's former teachers, also at the Holy Hour, recalled "how glad we were to see him during those days when I was teaching in Lima. All the other altar boys had trouble reaching the candles on the altar. Because he was always so tall, he never had any trouble lighting them."

Because "abortion is fast becoming an accepted way of life in New York State," Bishop Joseph L. Hogan has called a Special Conference of Concern for the Unborn, for all diocesans involved in Catholic education, for next week.

The conference will feature Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Wilke, a nationally known pro-life couple and authors of a Handbook on Abortion, and Mrs. Marjory Mecklenburg, president of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life and a specialist on alternatives to abortion.

The objectives of the conference, according to Father Robert Collins, director of the Office of Family Life, will be "To bring home to every person in the diocese who is formally involved in the education . . . of others, a deeper personal understanding of the reality of abortion and the threat it offers to our society:

to provide complete factual information on all aspects of the abortion issue . . . and to present alternatives to abortion so that we in this diocese may begin our Year of Renewal with positive programs that remove the causes which drive women to seek abortions."

The conference will be held in Rochester at St. Agnes High School on Wednesday, Sept. 27, and in Elmira at St. Casimir's School on Thursday, Sept. 28.

Bishop Hogan will open each conference.

The Wilkes in an average year speak before 50,000 people and appear on 100 radio and television programs.

Marjory Mecklenburg recently addressed the Pennsylvania Abortion Law Commission on developing alternatives to abortion.

Bishop Hogan's Letter

My dear Friend:

As you know, abortion is fast becoming an accepted way of life in New York State. And because it paves the way for attacks on human life that are even more chilling, such as infanticide and active euthanasia, I am calling a Special Conference of Concern for the Unborn.

All priests, religious, faculties of Catholic elementary schools, high schools, colleges and CCD Programs, as well as Parish Council leaders are requested to attend in order to bring home to every person in the diocese, who is formally involved in the education and spiritual formation of others, a deeper personal understanding of the reality of abortion and its threat to the people of our society.

In order to provide the most up-to-date information, we have invited three distinguished speakers to appear on the program:

Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Wilke of Cincinnati, nationally known speaking couple and authors of Handbook on Abortion.

Mrs. Marjory Mecklenburg, President of Minnesota

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Women Barred from Formal Ministry

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, appealing to the "venerable tradition of the Church," has barred women from even the smallest formal role in the ministry of the Church.

In a motu proprio — a decree

by his own hand — the Pope has extended the lower church ministries of Bible reading at Mass and service at the altar to lay adult Catholics, provided they are men. The decree, dated Aug. 15, was released here Sept. 14.

"In accordance with the venerable tradition of the Church," the pontiff declared, "installation in the ministries of lector (reader) and acolyte is reserved to men."

The ruling does not actually prohibit women from performing the two services, but it stipulates that they cannot be formally invested by a bishop with the right to do so.

There was some confusion in the secular media when the papal decree was first reported. Some broadcasts said that women were forbidden absolutely to function as lectors or acolytes.

(The general secretariat of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) in Washington, D.C., issued the following statement of clarification:

"The papal decree does not forbid women to serve as lectors and as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Women can continue to perform these functions just as they have done in increasing numbers in recent years . . .

"(Although, as the document from the Holy See states, 'installation in the ministries of the lector and acolyte is reserved to men,' this does not mean that women cannot perform the functions of lector or extraordinary minister of Communion, when authorized to do so.

"(On the contrary, women can continue to be authorized to serve in these roles, and the enthusiastic reception of this practice in many parts of the U.S. in recent years offers every assurance that this will be the case.")

Pope Paul said he held to tradition in barring women from

formal participation in the ministry after having taken into account "the views" of bishops throughout the world.

But he has not implemented a recommendation by the 1971 Synod of Bishops urging the Vatican to set up a special commission to study the possibility of expanding the active role of women in the Church in line with the principle of equality of the sexes.

The Vatican says the commission is still in the planning stage.

A separate motu proprio re-

affirmed the recent innovation that married men could serve as permanent deacons.

Many married Catholic men have been ordained to the permanent diaconate in the United States in the last few years.

According to the New York Times, the decree recalls that "a married man who has lost his wife cannot enter a new marriage." Unmarried candidates for the diaconate and all candidates for the office who want to become priests will in the fu-

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