

Bishops Join Congressman In TV Discussion of War

By JOHN DASH

Last week's unprecedented television appearance of both the Episcopal and Roman Catholic bishops of Rochester in discussion of the Vietnam war with Rep. Barber Conable turned into a spirited debate over the morality of both the Vietnam war and of war in general.

Broadcast last Tuesday as a special "Crossfire" program over WROC, Channel 8, in Rochester, the debate featured Bishops Joseph L. Hogan and Robert Spears.

Both bishops headed a "Peace Pilgrimage" to Washington May 15, and at the time characterized their discussions with Rochester's congressmen and senators as "very frustrating and very sad."

However, it was then reported, that "the bishop saw 'a little bit of a breakthrough' in regard to Conable and said he felt that Conable . . . felt hemmed in by the President."

Near the close of the Tuesday broadcast, Conable, who had been exchanging views rapidly with Bishop Spears, raised his hands and said that he hadn't meant to take up so much time defending his positions.

"Well, I think you have," Bishop Spears immediately rejoined.

Bishop Hogan opened the program with an explanation of the May pilgrimage and keyed the program as a discussion by "spiritual leaders of the moral implications of the war."

"I honestly believe," he said, "the war has made a terrible scar on the whole country and on the whole human community."

He then issued an apology for engaging as a churchman in what he said many believe is a political problem.

Conable answered that "nobody can 'meddle' in politics. It's everyone's business." He then stated there were many moral implications in the war including the rights of people to self-determination and the question of prisoners of war, saying "there are many ways the war could be ended without our conditions." He said American "insistence on winning" was one of those conditions.

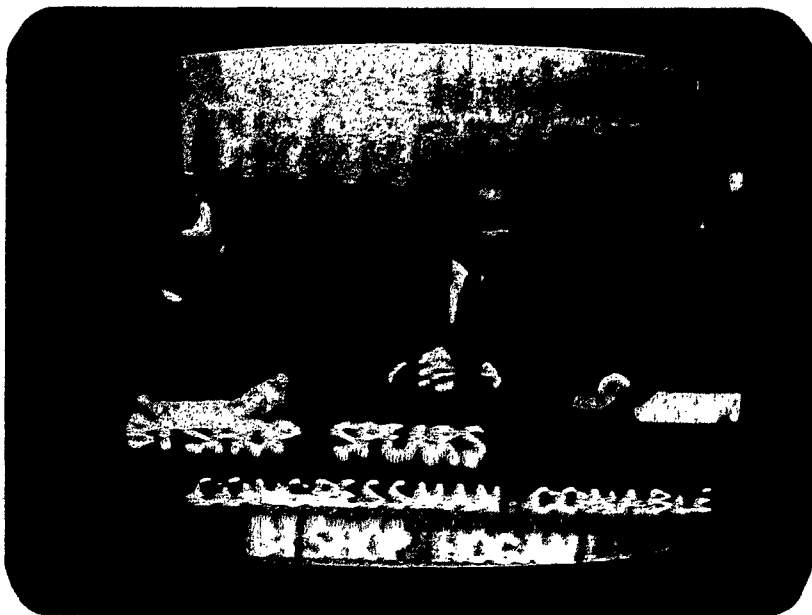


Photo by Laurence E. Keefe

Bishop Spears claimed a dichotomy between the stated and the real motives of the U.S. in Vietnam and said this is the source of a "moral sickening" in this country.

Conable interrupted the bishop by saying the U.S. was engaged against "aggression."

The program did not have a moderator; but the debate appeared to be between the bishops' view of the moral rectitude of an immediate withdrawal of American troops from Indochina versus Conable's view the troops were opposing aggression which requires negotiated settlement providing for stability in the area.

"You don't think we should negotiate?" Conable asked Bishop Spears. "You think we should wash our hands like Pontius Pilate?"

"The North and South could not mount the aggression we are presently mounting," Bishop Spears answered.

Conable questioned the morality of our deciding what form of government the South Vietnamese would have.

"In effect we've already decided that," Bishop Spears said.

Bishop Hogan said, "I really wonder if we're always going to be on this kick." He noted the diocesan Mission Sunday appeal and mused that it would be wonderful if the billions we spend

on war could be used instead for "life and the renewal of the face of the earth."

He said that by following the traditional Catholic "just war" theory, "war today can in no circumstances be justified."

Conable protested that everyone spends money to guard against tragedy. He cited fire and life insurance.

Bishop Spears asked, "Can anyone really equate life with life insurance?"

Bishop Hogan closed the program by saying that the reaction to the May trip was 95 per cent favorable and again expressed concern over the morality of the war.

PRO-VICAR NAMED

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul has named Archbishop Ugo Poletti to be pro-vicar general for the Diocese of Rome, succeeding to the post held by the late Cardinal Angelo Dell'Acqua, who died Aug. 27. Archbishop Poletti, 58, served as Cardinal Dell'Acqua's chief aide in governing the Rome diocese for the last three years.

RACL Resumes Meetings; Years of Renewal Topic

The Rochester Association of Catholic Laity will hold its first general meeting under the direction of its new officers on the subject "Years of Renewal."

Father Daniel Holland, director of the Diocesan "Year of Renewal," will speak, following the Eucharistic liturgy.

Brief presentations of concerns by RACL members will be offered on the subjects: "The responsible person — abortion and family life"; "The family and liturgy"; "Questions on parish structures"; "The Church and its mission to the poor"; and "The

role of the laity in ecumenical relations."

RACL, which since its founding has been concerned primarily with renewal in the Church, will seek through the ideas developed at the meeting to identify areas where it can contribute most significantly to the diocesan goal of renewal.

The meeting will begin at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27, in the chapel of St. John Fisher College (administration building). All RACL members are urged to attend this important meeting and bring a guest.



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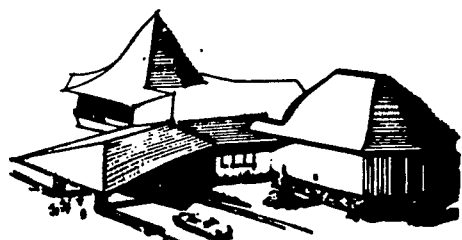
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