

Angry Protests Heard Over Abortion Ruling

From Religious News Service

Angry protests loud and clear underscored the Catholic Church position on abortion after the U.S. Supreme Court's "right of privacy" decision was revealed last week.

Catholics were urged to reject the court's judgment and do whatever they can to create a "pro life" climate of opinion.

In a scathing rebuke to the court on its decision to strike down abortion laws in 46 states, a leading Catholic spokesman termed the action a "terrifying use of judicial power" and "a violation of the moral and ethical convictions of millions of Americans."

Msgr. James T. McHugh, director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Family Life Division, said, however, that he is convinced the Court's action "will energize the pro-life movement" in the U. S. "rather than destroy it."

Asserting that the 7-2 decision "creates more problems than it solves," Msgr. McHugh said that for all practical purposes the Court had decided that in the matter of abortion "the so-called right of privacy supersedes the right to life."

Msgr. Mc Hugh's statement was released by the USCC in Washington.

Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington, scored the decision as "a catastrophe for America" and accused the court of embracing "a policy of death . . . for a whole class of our citizens."

"Defenseless children," he said, "whose only crime is to be unwanted by their parents, are condemned to death before birth, and our government seems no longer to consider the right to life as 'unalienable.'"

"Who shall be next?" he asked, adding that the implications "are horrible to contemplate."

Cardinal O'Boyle said everyone should keep it clear in mind the distinction of what is legal and what is moral. "The Supreme Court has decreed that abortion is legal. That does not make it morally permissible. No court can do that."

"Regardless of the Court's decision, abortion remains forbidden to all Catholics." He urged prayers of reparation "for those who will die."

Cardinal O'Boyle's statement was bolstered by statements from Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York. Cardinal Krol termed the ruling "an unspeakable tragedy for this nation."

"It is hard to think of any decision in the 200 years of our history," he said, "which has had more disastrous implications for our stability as a civilized nation."

Cardinal Cooke described the decision as "shocking" and "horrifying."

"Whatever their legal rationale, seven men have made a tragic utilitarian judgment regarding who shall live and who shall die," he said.

Eight other bishops declared they "cannot accept the Court's judgment" and urged Americans "not to follow its reasoning or conclusions."

Their statement came out of a Chicago meeting of the Committee for Pro-Life Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops chaired by Cardinal John Cody of Chicago.

"Although as a result of the Court's decision abortion may be legally permissible, it is still morally wrong and no Court opinion can change the law of God, prohibiting the taking of innocent human life," the statement asserted.

"Therefore, as religious leaders, we cannot accept the Court's judgment and we urge people not to follow its reasonings or conclusions."

They urged that every "legal possibility" be explored to challenge the opinion of the Court and that all state legislatures be urged to protect the unborn "to the fullest extent possible" under the Court ruling, "and restrict the practice of abortion as much as possible."

They pledged to put all the educational and informational resources of the Catholic Church at the disposal of a program that will "present the case for sanctity of the child's life from conception to birth." This would include a variety of studies and projects.

Finally, they charged that the Court wrote a "charter" for abortion on request, thereby depriving the unborn child of "his or her human rights."



Talks End Successfully

U.S. Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger (right) and Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam shake hands and smile at the conclusion of their long negotiations in Paris on a Vietnam cease-fire. The two men emerged from their final session without a word, leaving it to their capitals to announce that they had at last achieved success. Mr. Kissinger then returned to Washington, where he briefed President Nixon before the President announced that Mr. Tho and Mr. Kissinger had reached agreement on a cease-fire. (RNS)

Prelates Hopeful Of Genuine Peace

Philadelphia (RNS) — The president of the U.S. Catholic bishops' conference "heartened" by the Vietnam cease-fire pact, called on the nation to look to the "conciliation and reconstruction of which both Southeast Asia and our country stand in need."

Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia said in a statement that news of the cease-fire "is most heartening," and he paid tribute to the "courageous and persevering leadership" of the government in achieving the pact.

Thanking God for the end of war in Vietnam, the cardinal said he would now pray that the agreement will "mark the start of a genuine era of peace with honor for our nation and for Southeast Asia and for all the nations and peoples of the world."

Meanwhile, at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral, Cardinal Terence Cooke offered a special Noon Mass of thanksgiving. He expressed his joy and thanks that "the agony of war in Southeast Asia is approaching a peaceful solution and there is hope of a lasting peace with justice."

Cardinal Cooke is the military vicar for all Catholics in the U.S. armed forces.

Cardinal Krol, repeated the plea of the U.S. bishops last November calling for a dissipation of the "residue of bitterness" which could poison the post-war period.

He urged programs for returning veterans, special consideration to the wounded and maimed and families of those missing, and continued support for those who continue to serve in the military.

"We must also give our earnest attention, as well, to the situation of those young men who have suffered for their refusal to participate in the war because of sincere conscientious belief," he said.

"We must also be generous in extending moral, material and technical aid to the people of Southeast Asia who have suffered so grievously," the cardinal added. He called upon all Americans, "sorely divided by this conflict" over the years, to join in a common effort for peace.

Cardinal Krol

PRESIDENT, NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

The Supreme Court's decision today is an unspeakable tragedy for this nation. It is hard to think of any decision in the 200 years of our history which has made more disastrous implications for our stability as a civilized society. The ruling drastically diminishes the constitutional guaranty of the right to life and in doing so sets in motion developments which are terrifying to contemplate.

The ruling represents bad logic and bad law. There is no rational justification for allowing unrestricted abortion up to the third month of pregnancy. The development of life before and after birth is a continuous process and in making the three-months point the cutoff for unrestricted abortion, the Court seems more impressed by magic than by scientific evidence regarding fetal development. The child in the womb has the right to life, to the life he already pos-

sesses, and this is a right no court has the authority to deny.

Apparently the Court was trying to straddle the fence and give something to everybody — abortion on demand before three months for those who want that, somewhat more restrictive abortion regulations after three months for those who want that. But in its straddling act, the Court has done a monstrous injustice to the thousands of unborn children whose lives may be destroyed as a result of this decision.

No court and no legislature in the land can make something evil become something good. Abortion at any stage of pregnancy is evil. This is not a question of sectarian morality but instead concerns the law of God and the basis of civilized society. One trusts in the decency and good sense of the American people not to let an illogical court decision dictate to them on the subject of morality and human life.

Cardinal Cooke

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

How many millions of children will never live to see the light of day because of the shocking action of the majority of the United States Supreme Court today?

Whatever their legal rationale, seven men have made a tragic utilitarian judgment regarding who shall live and who shall die. They have made themselves a "super legislature." They have gone against the will of those American people who spoke their minds in favor of life as recently as last November in refer-

endums in Michigan and North Dakota. They have usurped the powers and responsibilities of the legislatures of 50 states to protect human life.

I remind all Americans, however, that judicial decisions are not necessarily sound moral decisions.

In spite of this horrifying decision, the American people must rededicate themselves to the protection of the sacredness of all human life. I hope and pray that our citizens will do all in their power to reverse this injustice to the rights of the unborn child.

Cardinal Dearden

Cardinal John Dearden, archbishop of Detroit and past-president of the NCCB and USCC, said he was "appalled by the decision" and "fearful of its implications."

"We must all bear in mind," he said, "that court decisions are not necessarily sound decisions. It rests upon us now to reaffirm, in spite of this decision, our traditional Christian judgment of the worth of human life and our obligation to act in accord with this conviction."

In a joint statement, Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken of San Francisco, Bishop Mark J. Hurley of Santa Rosa and Bishop Merlin J. Guilfoyle of Stockton, Calif., said, in part:

"The ruling is a complete contradiction of the innate moral ideas set forth by the Founding Fathers of this nation who spoke of 'inalienable rights' to life and liberty.

"We urge our people to prayerful protest of this tragic decision which gives the stamp of approval to legalized murder within the families of the nation.

"The consciences of all decent people can only be outraged by this shameful ruling. We urge our people to renewed resolution in defense of all life — especially of the defenseless unborn — 'For this day I have set before you life and death. Therefore, choose life that you and your descendants may live' (Deut. 30:19)."

Mormon Mission Notes Ninth Anniversary

The Cumorah Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), covering almost all of New York State, and certain areas of Pennsylvania, celebrated its ninth anniversary Jan. 26.

Harold B. Lee, present Mormon Prophet and leader of the 3.2-million-member church, conducted the first organizational meeting for the Cumorah Mission in Schenectady in 1964. The mission was formed from a geographically larger mission termed the Eastern States Mission, which covered several eastern states. The appointments of a new presidency, and organization within the mission were directed by President Lee.

The mission received its inter-

esting name from Hill Cumorah in Palmyra, where the perennial pageant is performed by 600 vibrant Mormon youth and volunteers each July-August. They come from more than 40 of the 50 United States and parts of Canada.

The Cumorah Mission, one of 101 missions of the world-wide Church that now exists, has developed and grown since its inception in 1964. The missionary force has increased, from approximately 130 missionaries that covered the New York and Pennsylvania areas to almost 200 missionaries working today. The Mormon population in the Cumorah area has shown the increase by nearly doubling in the last nine years to about 17,500 today.

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