

Life, Liberty and Law

Nancy Murphy

"The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in a period of moral crisis maintain their neutrality."

—Dante

In New York State abortion has been debated for years. Those favoring abortion on demand and many are wealthy and educated, have stressed it as a solution to a number of social problems.

They have published scores of cost-analysis charts intended to show that abortion is the preferred solution to economic ills. They insist that America's correctional institutions are filled with 'unwants'. They issue their 'in-depth' reports to predict that abortion will end world famine. They teach that abortion is safe and desirable.

Those who favor abortion on demand see the human child as a consumer for the first 15 years of life in a world which, they tell us, desperately needs producers. They approve and encourage federal funding of abortifacient research, and patronizingly suggest that abortion should be available to the poor. They say again and again that each person should be free to select his own method of family planning, free to follow the dictates of his own conscience.

The Human Life advocates on the other hand, have stressed the biological fact that human life starts with the fertilization of the living ovum by the living sperm. That, once started, human life exists and has intrinsic worth, value and dignity.

We have stressed that liberalized abortion is the first step toward total dehumanization, leading inevitably to euthanasia, live fetal experimentation, forced sterilization, suicide clinics, genetic manipulation and eventually national self-annihilation. War has failed to eliminate human greed; abortion would fail to eliminate human hunger.

We are getting through to some closed minds.

But after seven long years of abortion debate, the five Rochester area Congressmen are unable to publicly announce any definitive stand on the issue. Frank Horton, Barber Conable, James Hastings, Howard Robison, and William Walsh. Each has maintained neutrality. Each refuses to co-sponsor the Hogan Human Life Amendment. Each has expressed qualms about signing the Discharge Petition relevant to it. However, Horton, Conable, Hastings and Robison signed the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment Discharge Petition) they had no qualms about that.

I ask you to keep Dante's words in mind as you read Article V of the Constitution.

Space Workshop Slated for Fisher

Western New York State's first aerospace science program will be sponsored by St. John Fisher College as part of its summer session. The aerospace/science education workshop will run July 22 to August 8, Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

It will feature guest lectures, demonstrations of rocket building, firing into space and recovery of NASA personnel and discussions of space flights, environmental problems and career opportunities. George Caraker, science teacher at Eastridge High School, will conduct the workshop.

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of this Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states.

All we are asking of our five Congressmen is that they set a Constitutional Amendment before the 50 state legislatures, an amendment which will proclaim the dignity and worth of the human life and spirit. And not one of these gentlemen has accepted the challenge, nor has one of them had the courage to intelligently deny it. They have maintained their neutrality.

If ever there will be a Patron Saint of Procrastination, surely he will have passed his earthly life as a politician.

But Dante's words are not limited to our recalcitrant Representatives. They apply equally to the Bayh Subcommittee members, many of whom have not even bothered to attend the Senate hearings, and to the news editors who refuse to publish the scientific and medical testimonies presented thereto. They apply to churchmen who have chosen accommodation rather than active moral leadership. And they apply to all who are indifferent, naive or silent. Dante's statement applies to the doctors and nurses who have set a seal upon their lips; to the teachers, by no means limited to those employed in the public school systems, who insist upon liberalizing the senses, indulging the desires, and who stress the need for pursuing the pleasures of self-gratification. Dante's candid reservations refer to school board members, writers and bishops.

Please understand that American law, as interpreted by our Supreme Court, allows abortion literally on demand. Patricia Butler in a masterful piece of pro-abortion rhetoric (Clearing House Review, April 1974) describes the prevailing government-accepted definition of abortion, "any abortion which a woman requests is a medical necessity, since the very request for the procedure indicates the importance of terminating the pregnancy to the woman's health, whether physical, mental or emotional." If a state limits Medicaid abortions to those which are 'medically necessary' its policies violate the Constitution as interpreted in Roe and Doe (the abortion decision).

Please urge your Congressman, your local editor and Senator Birch Bayh to recognize abortion for what it is, the deliberate destruction of a human life at the hands of a human doctor and the request of a human mother. It is a final solution to nothing. It is not family planning. It is not a mother's right. It sterilizes the human spirit and will annihilate the human civilization. In a word, it is the perfect evil.

If you have scant time for writing, please send this entire column, every week.

However, if you prefer to test the veracity of Dante's observation, sit in silent smugness, you won't be alone. But I can't vouch for the humanness of your companions.

Area Congressmen can be reached: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Senator Birch Bayh, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.



OUTSTANDING PARISHIONER

Father Raymond Heisel, pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church, presents Phil Callan, the Outstanding Parishioner award, while Stan Stahura, chairman of the Parish Council, looks on. Callan was honored for his years of "generous and unselfish service" to the parish.

Governor Approves Reimbursement For Nonpublic School Expenses

Albany [RNS] — Gov. Wilson of New York has signed a bill to reimburse nonpublic schools, private and church-related, for pupil evaluation programs and state-required tests and record-keeping.

The new law was passed to meet objections of the U.S. Supreme Court to a similar measure — the Mandated Services Act of 1970. The 1970 law was ruled unconstitutional because the state had no guarantee the money would be used for designated purposes.

Unlike the earlier law, the new act calls for payment of actual expenses and audits of the bills according to a memorandum issued by Gov. Wilson. Funds would be given to private and parochial schools only after an audit of vouchers submitted by each school.

The annual expenditure is expected to total about \$8.2 million and will affect some 700,000 students.

Father Daniel Brent, superintendent of schools for the Rochester diocese said that the aid to mandated services will affect 8,471 Catholic high school students and 26,111 Catholic elementary students at a cost of between \$5 and \$10 per student. "We will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses," Father Brent said.

Under the new law that is retroactive for this year, non-public schools will be reimbursed for the costs of complying with the state's pupil evaluation programs, regents examinations, attendance requirements and examination requirements. A key issue in the debate has been over teacher designed classroom testing.

"The Legislature felt that this was more of a teaching function than a monitoring by the state," said Father Brent who feels the testing not only enforces teaching but is evaluative. Father Brent called the bill "a modest recognition of mutual responsibility" by the Legislature.

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