

# Life, Liberty and Law

Manny Murphy

In an article published four years ago in *Northwest Medicine*, Robert H. Williams M.D. penned a classic literary prescription for euthanasia. Volumes had been written previously and volumes since, with more to come, but Dr. Williams' capsule is a lethal gem. It is brief, Direct, Persuasive, Powerful, And horrifying. The 3 1/2 page article **Number Types and Duration of Human Lives** comes directly to the point even before the opening sentence. The sub-title reads, "Planning to prevent overpopulation of the earth must include the practice of euthanasia, either positive or negative."

The opening sentence is an echo, "Population experts are giving us vigorous warnings that steps must be initiated at an early date for the restriction of the population increase." The closing sentence, also an echo of the abortionist days, "We must exercise great wisdom, not only in attempting to ascertain what is right, but what are the most intelligent routes to pursue in establishing the most appropriate laws and public policies concerned with the quality and quantity of life, both generated and terminated." (emphasis added)

Encapsulated within his awesome alpha and ominous omega Dr. Williams maintains that each man must weigh the continuance of his own life in light of the social advantages and disadvantages it offers; suicides must be assured that "their wishes will be granted if success is not encountered within a period considered reasonable by experts" and the existing life-protection laws must be changed to "conform with what seems to be right, and what the public desires."

Many learned men, and Dr. Williams admits this, fear the wedge theory, namely once a bizarre death procedure is sanctioned legally for an extreme case, it will be extended to numerous additional situations for which there is no justification. This is precisely what happened in the wake of the abortion decision with rape and incest providing the sharp, direct, persuasive and powerful opening wedge followed by an estimated one million abortions the first twelve months.

But Dr. Williams dismisses the wedge theory. He writes simply, "My philosophy is, as the wedge becomes too broad, we can use an even broader axe."

That sentence alone resurrects the thud of the mailed boot, the smell of the mobs surrounded by

torches and flags, and the starkness of the reasoning behind the final solution of a similar problem of another age. But Dr. Williams does not stop there. He continues:

"At least initially, it seems desirable to deal predominantly with individuals with great mental or physical suffering, then (with) those who have reached a vegetative stage and who seem incurable, particularly the ones who offer certain major problems."

"It seems unwise to attempt to bring about major changes permitting positive euthanasia until we have made major progress in changing laws and policies pertaining to negative euthanasia" and

"We of the medical profession should play a highly active role of leadership in such promulgation."

This is not an isolated voice in the desert. It is not the cacophony of a sophisticated college-graduated woman who espouses momentarily the breathless giddiness of the liberation bandwagon. These are the words of a recognized medical authority, an expert, a professor of endocrinology at Seattle's University of Washington. And unlike the glib college girl, the educated author of this capsule of human depopulation (Chesterton referred to it as "social subtraction") is in a position to act on his beliefs. His is the mind to be feared.

Extreme cases make bad law. The opening wedge of abortion incised a nation, a nation whose birth rates had already fallen to record lows, and whose present birth-rate is below replacement level. Euthanasia will follow. Leaders who in cowardice or in profit have accommodated one will likely embrace the other. And that includes the silent men of the church.

Write for yourself. Elliot Richardson, Charles Percy, Nelson Rockefeller, William Draper (U.S. Representative on the Population Commission for the United Nations), Strom Thurmond, Bella Abzug, Peter Rodino, Hugh Carey, Don Edwards, Birch Bayh, Robert MacNamara, Ramsey Clark, Jacob Javits, Frank Horton, Barber Conable, Howard Robison, William Walsh, James Hastings.

I like what my friend Gma Vianney said, "Death is not the solution to life."

## Religious Dimension Of Holy Year Stressed

Vatican City (RNS) — The Roman Catholic Church is more concerned with the "religious" dimension of its 1975 Holy Year than with the "sociological" impact of its observance, according to Cardinal Maximilian de Furstenberg.

In an interview on Vatican Radio, the cardinal, who is chairman of the Holy Year Central Committee, said "the essential meaning" of the year is to be found "in reference to God," and not in reference to contemporary social problems.

"The Church," he said, "certainly does not ignore these problems — indeed, Christians must be concerned with the triumph of truth, justice, and peace in the world."

"But," he stressed, "for the Church the key problem is that of the relationship of man with God, and therefore her Holy Year

message is primarily an appeal to men to return to the Lord along the paths of the Gospel and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Cardinal de Furstenberg added that "the significance of the Holy Year springs from its essentially religious nature and more precisely from its penitential, ecclesial, and — if one wishes to say so — its charismatic nature."

### CLOTHESLINE SHOW

The 18th annual Clothesline Show at the Memorial Art Gallery Sept. 7 and 8 will be the largest ever, with 540 artists and craftsmen taking part. Hours are 11 a.m.-7 p.m. both days, on the gallery campus between Prince and Goodman Streets on University Avenue. If both days are rained out, the show will be rescheduled for the following weekend. Among new features this year will be a display of paintings, drawings and leather work by inmates of Attica.

# Father Boehm Gets New Post

Father Frank C. Boehm, CSB, a teacher for 20 years at Aquinas Institute, has been appointed treasurer and business manager for the school. In addition, he will also remain a member of the math department staff.

His new positions entail the responsibility for all business and accounting operations in the school. He will also supervise maintenance personnel and will be in charge of the building and grounds surrounding Aquinas.

Father Boehm, a 1944 Aquinas graduate, is an alumnus of the University of Toronto and St.

Basil's Seminary. He was ordained in 1954.

He also holds a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Rochester, a Master of Science Degree in Mathematics from the University of Buffalo and has studied business and accounting at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

While at Aquinas Father Boehm has also served as moderator of the Student Council and has acted as advisor for The Maroon and White, the school publication. For five years he was also the school's athletic trainer.

Other changes in the Aquinas

faculty for the 1974-75 school year are: Father Michael B. Biondi, CSB, returning to the language department after two years of graduate studies in linguistics at Georgetown University and Father Robert Smith, CSB, from Detroit, Mich., the new chairman of the theology department.

Manny Chircop, CSB, and Richard Brown, CSB, will join the English department while Richard Parrinello, varsity football coach, will teach history and physical education and William Lukaszonas, varsity hockey coach, teaches business.

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