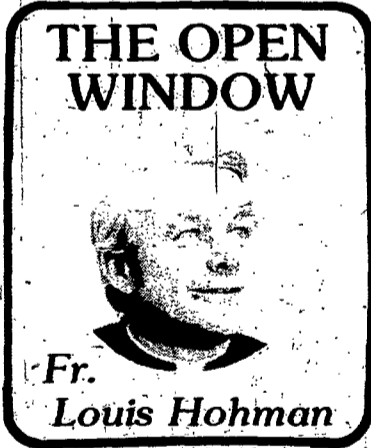


Planned Parenthood has released figures showing that 900,000 legal abortions were performed in the United States during 1974 with New York and California accounting for 40 per cent of all U.S. abortions during the first quarter of 1974. . . . Meanwhile, in what could be a landmark decision, a U.S. District Court in San Francisco, has granted food stamp rights to an unborn child of a woman in her eighth month of pregnancy. A judge ordered the Agriculture Department to permit the woman an extra \$38 worth of food stamps to provide extra nourishment until her baby is born. Under the ruling, the unborn fetus is to be treated as a separate, living human person.

Thank goodness the Willowdale United Church congregation in Toronto, Canada, objected or else their minister would have married Rajah and Rani, two mynah-birds. He said that in the midst of all the gloomy news he thought the marriage would be good news. His congregation, judging by 112 letters and telephone calls, thought otherwise. Appropriately it is reported that other organizations, notably six gambling casinos in Las Vegas, are vying for the privilege of marrying Rajah and Rani. Chances are that it won't last more than six months anyway. . . . Some genuine good news: President Ford talking about the loneliness of the presidency, added, "The satisfaction of knowing that uncounted numbers of good people are praying for you is infinitely rewarding. To me, as to many of my predecessors, it is a terribly important source of strength and confidence."

In Brazil, the Catholic Church is considering making an appeal to the government to grant amnesty to all political prisoners. A spokesman said that nothing definite had been decided but "it is very probable the Church would appeal for an amnesty." Spanish Catholic bishops recently made a similar appeal to Madrid as part of Pope Paul's general call to all governments to grant amnesty to political prisoners. . . . the recent action taken by Pope Paul in establishing a review of personnel and spending in the Vatican recalls a Pope Johnism. When asked how many people work in the Vatican, he smiled, "About half of them." Negotiations are under way between Portugal and the Vatican to iron out the final details of an agreement that will amend the 35-year-old concordat to permit courts in Portugal to grant divorces to those married in the Catholic Church. Both sides confirmed the discussions.

A Catholic priest, general editor of a controversial sex education program for Catholic grade school children called "Becoming a Person," has married one of the program's co-authors. Father Walter Imborski edited the sex education program which has recently been assailed by Catholic parents who believe that fifth-grade children should not be exposed to what the parents interpret as explicit sex instruction. . . . Catholic educators in Boston have reaffirmed a policy supporting controversial federal court-ordered desegregation of public schools and have adopted a policy of "no admission" for students seeking refuge from the desegregation plan.



Dear Father Hohman,
My daughter took the high school entrance exam in December, and is anxiously awaiting word of her acceptance. Since the exam we have heard from several friends that being accepted depends more on the financial status and/or pull of the parents than on how well she does on the test.

These friends also have implied that she has a very slim chance of being accepted because she attended a public grammar school. Hearing this really "scalded" me. I just cannot believe that a school which turns away 200 freshmen a year would use those means as a measuring stick. Would you have any "inside track" at the high schools in order to tell me if there is any truth in this at all?

Concerned
E. K. S.

Dear E. K. S.,

I tried to get an "inside track" on the question but came up with only evidence to the contrary: The Diocesan Education Office in particular took a very dim view of even the idea or possibility of such. If such things were to occur, human nature being what it is, I assure you they would not go on for long once revealed to diocesan authorities.

What you say in your letter sounds like sheer rumor, unfounded and untraceable. If you want to put your own mind to rest, insist that these "friends" give you hard, first-hand evidence of what they say. If they cannot, then urge them gently to refrain from such damaging statements. Is there any chance of "sour grapes" on the part of your informant — a relative or friend was not accepted and an excuse had to be contrived to explain the failure? Until real evidence is forthcoming, I suggest we drop the case.

Dear Father Hohman,

Is it true that we are going back to having all the weekdays of Lent as fastdays this year?

D. P.

Dear D. P.,

Not by law. But it's not such a bad idea for many reasons. Food prices, fat, need for penance and mortification, sign of concern for the hungry, etc.



Long Line of Refugees

As Cambodian insurgents increase their offensive, long lines of refugees are once again on the move towards the relative safety of Phnom Penh. Civilian casualties have been heavy in the fighting, which at some points is no more than 10 miles from the Cambodian capital, and at least 20,000 new refugees have flooded into Phnom Penh since the beginning of 1975. (RNS)

Strict Missouri Law On Abortion Upheld

St. Louis [RNS] — Most sections of Missouri's strict 1974 Abortion Control Act were declared constitutional by a three-judge panel here.

Upheld were provisions that bar the saline method of abortion, that require a husband's consent to a married woman's abortion, that require a mother under age 18 to obtain her parents' prior consent to an abortion, and that make survivors of abortions wards of the state.

Overruled was the provision requiring physicians to take all possible steps to keep an aborted fetus alive.

The court's decision, in some parts by a split vote, will be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, according to attorneys for Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri, the plaintiff. Because this ruling on the Missouri law combines a number of yet-unconsidered issues, especially parental rights, the court might agree to hear the appeal, said lawyers for both sides.

The Missouri law, signed June 14, 1974 by Gov. Christopher Bond, was attacked mainly on the grounds that states have no authority to control abortion matters during the first three months of pregnancy under terms of the January 1973 ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The only part of the law that was overturned had demanded that physicians take all possible steps to keep a fetus alive or they could be "deemed guilty of manslaughter."

That section was "unconstitutionally overbroad," said Judges Roy W. Harper, H. Kenneth Wangelin and William H. Webster.

Upholding the provision requiring a husband's consent to his wife's abortion, Judges Harper and Wangelin said husbands have a right to a voice in something which "may have a profound effect on the future reproductive capacity of the marriage." Judge Webster dissented, saying the matter was within a pregnancy's first three months, and thus not subject to legislation.

Upholding parental consent for an abortion on a woman under age 18, Judges Harper and Wangelin said a minor child "is deemed incapable of giving legal consent" and that the Supreme Court did not intend "to have the effect of emancipating children in that respect." Judge Webster dissented again because of the three-month time limit.

Upholding the state provision that makes a surviving fetus a ward of the state, Judges Harper and Wangelin said an abortion was equivalent to child abandonment, which also strips parents of their rights to a child. Judge Webster dissented, saying this deprivation of rights lacks procedural due process.

Upholding the state ban on saline abortions after the first three months of pregnancy, Judges Harper and Wangelin said that procedure has hazards to the mother's health and that the state can legally ban it. Judge Webster dissented, saying the law is "unwarranted intrusion in medical discretion."

The three judges also upheld

those portions of the Missouri law which require a signed statement of freely given consent from the woman undergoing an abortion, and which requires that abortion records be kept for seven years.

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