

Life, Liberty and Law.



Nancy Murphy

Commonplace occurrence, said the hospital. Happens all the time. Accepted medical practice. The lives were devoid of meaningful humanhood. They were given reasonable care and support until they starved to death. Nothing new. It's just that these particular cases were exposed. But it happens all the time.

Richard A. McCormick, SJ was somewhat less callous, somewhat less blunt as he too referred to the now famous and forgotten announcement in 1973 of the 43 deformed infants who were 'allowed to die' at the Yale-New Haven Hospital between Jan. 1970 and July 1972. I agree to a point, he seemed to say, but be careful how you phrase it. . . . life is not an absolute. . . . it's relative. Therefore, according to the learned Jesuit, the duty to preserve it is limited. He urged criteria which would serve as guidelines for the medical community and parents, to determine which infants should be saved and which should not.

Dr. Joseph Fletcher of the euthanasia council has been propounding the same approach for years. (Life, Liberty and Law, Feb. 5.)

Father McCormick says those infants with no potential for relationships . . . those who are incapable of responding to others have probably reached their potential at birth and minor medical treatment may be withheld. They may be allowed to die. He admits that human judgment is often erroneous, but rises above the obstacle by holding fast to his first announcement. . . . life is not an absolute.

The cold clear reasoning of a hospital, a Jesuit and a pro-euthanasia medical doctor.

Well, hold it. Hold it.

"Oh my God. . . ." said the young mechanic whose name we never asked. "Oh my God, my God," echoed his wife. Her face was the color of a winter sky as she wept the only words to surface through her obvious

torment. Their baby was in the operating room for exploratory surgery when a physician came to tell them the child's heart had stopped unexpectedly. We had been talking with the couple, as we too waited for results from exploratory. I remember the waiting room was tiny, patched, old, and crowded (with fewer than a dozen people). We four stood in the hall just outside the room.

And we were, as stunned as they, for it paralyzes the human mind to realize that a mere hundred yards away, a three-year-old boy has just died. An eternity of silence preceded the second announcement from the O.R. "He's been revived! He will live!"

I can still feel the impact of joy. The little guy would make it. And I can still see his father's face as it reflected the awesome surge of hope his face of vulnerable love. No one, not even the most educated among us, could mistake that man's reaction. The physician took the parents aside and we never saw them again.

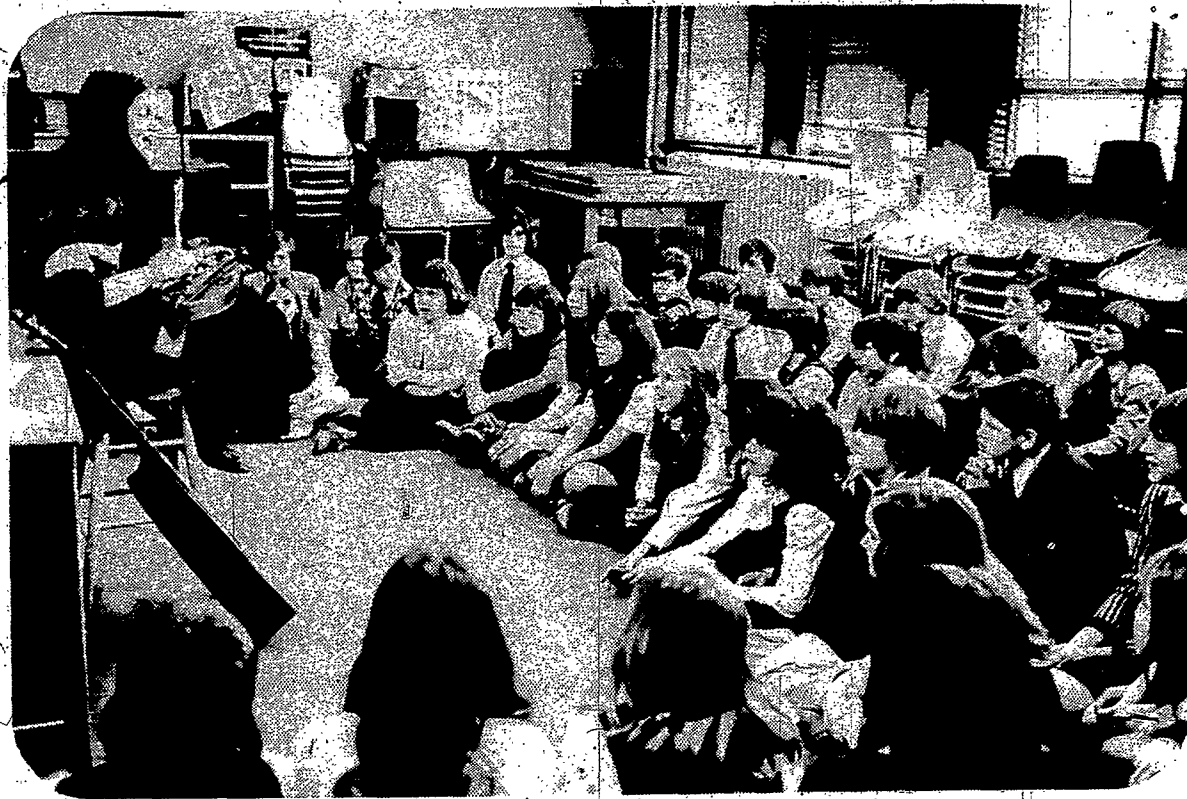
The youngster in O.R. was retarded. Severely. His heart was malformed. His stomach was misplaced, his legs in steel braces, his circulation imperfect. He was partially blind. He did not know his mother and father and surely could not respond meaningfully to their caresses. The exploratory surgery was undertaken to determine the extent of his visual disability. His parents knew he would not live long, and never normally. But they told us that their family (four 'normal' children at home) would be empty without him.

Dear God. They stood there in the hall with his special glasses and his steel braces and connected shoes in their hands and wept at the loss of this single human life which had been imperfectly fashioned from their own bodies. And I will be forever grateful to them. For there is no goal more worthy of our striving than a single glimpse of purity of spirit.

I reach out often to that trio of people in Indiana. They are my source of strength in a world too full of hospitals and priests and doctors who are too occupied justifying the destruction-point of human life to offer spiritual guidance. I reach out to that little boy on whom I have never laid eyes.

I need him now. I always will. And where are the educators who will define his life as meaningless? Blind men! Can they not see it is not that child's response to us but ours to him that matters? I need that little boy.

His life is one of my absolutes.



Photos by Susan McKinney

Holy Rosary Celebration

Rochester folksinger, Mitzi Collins, at left, plays a mountain dulcimer for Holy Rosary school children. Her Feb. 4 visit to the school was one of several events in the school's celebration of Catholic Education Week. In the photo at right, Michael Schmidt, Nancy Franclemont, and Janine Donnellan study Mitzi's technique.



RENT-A-KID

Aquinas Plans Ceramics Class

The Aquinas Art Department Adult Ceramic Classes will begin Monday, Feb. 24 and continue for 12 weeks on Mondays from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

The course is directed toward the handling of clay, apart from molds and castings which are not used in the course. Instruction will be given in the use of the potter's wheel as well as in other hand-building methods of creating clay forms.

Aquinas art director, Father Leonard Cullen, will be the instructor. The class will be limited to 10 with the charge \$60. No other fees will be charged.

Dansville — Eighteen eighth graders of St. Mary's School are anxious to raise an additional \$400 to add to their already earned \$600 to make a Canadian trip from May 30 to June 6.

A Rent-A-Kid project for 75c an hour doing yard work, baby sitting and household work has been successful and is continuing. Maureen Sweet, their teacher, has planned a schedule of visiting Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, staying at youth hostels. Projects included pizza and candy sales, bake sale, and a car wash. Parents of the students will accompany the group on this bus trip.

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Capitol Letters

The Natural Family Planning Federation of America, Inc., has submitted a proposal entitled "A Proposal to Develop a Natural Family Planning Delivery System" to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The proposal includes plans for a national training center, which will provide quality training to teach the natural methods to trainer couples and nurses and also instruct them in the fiscal management of these services. One month will be spent at Catholic University, followed by a six-month period of supervised internship. The training ends with oral and written examinations which must be passed in order to receive certification. Those who have been trained will be able to train other master trainers and will also know how to collect data for natural family planning research.

Please write to Dr. Carl Schultz, director, Office of Population Affairs, DHEW, Room 4065, North Bldg., 330 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201 and Dr. Louis Hellman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs, Room 4059 at the same address, and request that this natural family planning proposal be federally funded.

For further information contact one of the experienced natural family planning couples at 482-0182 or the Office of Family Life (Father Robert Collins) 546-3630.

Liturgy Marks Women's Year

An interdenominational Sister Celebration to mark the opening of International Women's Year was held Sunday afternoon, Jan. 26, under the auspices of the NOW Task Force on Women and Religion.

About 40 women and men took part, speaking of their personal concerns during a candle lighting

ceremony in Immanuel Baptist Church. Some offered original poetry. There were religious folk songs, with guitar accompaniment.

The task force, which includes Jews and Christians of many denominations, is planning a program of religious services for the year.

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