



Betty Ford, the President's wife, who publicly has advocated support of the Equal Rights Amendment for women, reports that mail has run 3 to 1 against her position, 1,128 opposed and 360 in favor. Thirty-four of the 38 states needed have ratified it and it is under discussion in other states, including New York, where the Assembly has passed it. . . . A 16-member lay-dominated board has been formed in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to operate archdiocesan schools. The new board, according to Cardinal Aponte-Martinez, will seek to make Catholic education available to all classes and to remove "all dehumanizing elements" from the school system. . . . Fifty residents of Bellwood, Pa., fasted for 30 hours to show their love and sympathy for the hungry people of the world. They fasted in the Logan Valley Baptist Church and at the end of the 30 hours ate a "third world banquet" of rice, broth and green tea.

The appointment of Nathaniel Davis as assistant secretary of state for African affairs, is opposed by Sister Janice McLaughlin, a Maryknoll nun, who serves in Africa, because it has aroused "indignation and frustration" in that continent. Davis is former U.S. ambassador to Chile. . . . Problems, problems — the new \$4-million closed-circuit television network of the Archdiocese of Chicago has been described by Church officials as open to all priests but the Association of Chicago Priests has been denied time. A spokesman said it is not up to the archdiocese to "provide a forum for dissidents." . . . And Newsprint, an ecumenical newsletter provides this one: A large roadside sign outside the Baptist church in Bass River, Mass., proclaims, "Our 150th anniversary — we must do something righteous."

Divorce probably will come to Brazil. At least that is the opinion of Archbishop Alberto Guadencio Ramos of Belem, according to the New York Times. He reportedly said, "I believe that divorce will come to Brazil although Catholics will maintain their position on the indissolubility of marriage" and not recognize civil divorce. . . . In England, opponents of the liberalized Abortion Act are pleased as punch over the progress in the House of Commons of a bill designed to amend and strip away abuses in the act. By a 203-88 vote, Commons approved for further action a bill that proposes a stricter definition of the medical grounds for an abortion; abortions would be illegal after 20 weeks instead of the present 28, except in special cases where a 24-week limit would be set; abortions on foreign women not resident for 20 weeks would be banned; much tighter control of private abortions would be required, and advisory and referral bureaus would be licensed.

Abortion on Demand Struck Down by W. German Court

Karlsruhe [RNS] — West Germany's highest court has struck down as unconstitutional a recently passed law permitting abortion on demand within the first three months of pregnancy.

In a 6 to 2 decision, the Constitutional Court here ruled that the government-sponsored measure legalizing abortions, which received final parliamentary approval on June 5, 1974, violated the Constitution's guarantee of the right to life for everyone.

The court's majority argued that the Constitution gave highest priority to the preservation of life and required that this principle be given the widest possible interpretation in law.

According to the majority opinion, the state has a duty to protect every human being from the beginning of its existence, which, the ruling said, means the 14th day after conception.

The decision referred to the "bitter experience" of the Nazi period in Germany as providing "historical grounds" for giving "absolute priority" to the protection of human life.

Declaring, however, that this order of values can be overridden only in "special instances," the court ruled that abortions could be performed in the first three months of pregnancy in cases of rape, of danger to the mother's health, when there was a prospect that the child might be born deformed, and when the birth could cause "grave hardship."

Cardinal Julius Döpfner of Munich and Freising, president of the West German Catholic Bishops' Conference, who led the Catholic Church's fight against the June 5 law, welcomed the Constitutional Court's ruling as a "limitation to the growing trend of watering down basic social values."

The abortion reform law was passed by a parliamentary majority of Social Democrats and Free Democrats. But the Southern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, supported by three other states and a group of 192 opposition Christian Democrat parliamentarians appealed the law to the Constitutional Court, which issued a temporary injunction on June 24.

The law, which allowed abortion on demand "if no more than 12 weeks have elapsed since conception," stressed that after the three-month limit abortion was illegal and punishable by a fine or a prison sentence of up to three years unless there were specific grounds for assuming that the mother's health was seriously threatened.

LENTEEN LECTURE

Auburn — What is a Catholic will be the topic of the Monday, March 10 Lenten Lecture to be given by Dr. William Kelly, director of Religious Education at Holy Family Parish. The Lenten Series sponsored by the St. Alphonsus Liturgy Committee will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Blessed Trinity School on E. Genesee Street in Auburn.



Prayer at Memorial Wall

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir prays at a memorial wall showing the names of German concentration camps where millions of Jews were killed during World War II, while visiting the Jewish Community Center in West Berlin. She was in the city to attend an international Socialist meeting. (RNS)

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