

Life, Liberty and Law



Nancy Murphy

Professionally speaking it hasn't been all roses recently. A half dozen of the thorns which came in my mail:

* The FDA has approved limited use of DES (diethylstilbestrol) as an "emergency morning after pill" despite congressional misgivings. According to the package insert, DES administered to animals over periods of time "has increased the frequency of cancer in some species."

* Planned Parenthood of Washington D.C., in cooperation with high school social workers or mental health counselors, is conducting weekly 3-hour rap sessions on birth control, offering a full range of contraceptive services; pap smears, breast exams, and VD treatment. Under local statutes, minors can receive information and/or treatment for VD and contraception including abortions, without parental consent. Set up as a Teen Health Center, PP's clinic serves the Woodson Community High School "in the less-than-affluent northeast section of the city."

* The Maryland state legislature is considering a bill (introduced by Baltimore County Democrat Howard J. Needle) which would limit state tax deductions to two children per family.

* Planned Parenthood announced an increase of 20-25 per cent a year in the number of abortions performed in the United States since 1970, placing abortion, second only to tonsillectomy as the most common surgical procedure in America today.

* In his remarks denying all Norwegian nurses the right to refuse to assist in abortions, Mr. Tobjorn Mork, the health director of Norway, questioned whether any person refusing to perform or assist in the performance of abortions "has a place in our medical community."

* Dr. R.T. Ravenholt (Office of Population for the Agency of International Development)

hailed a new form of female sterilization (called the "belly button surgery") developed at Johns Hopkins University hospital. "Few" serious complications reported in the 638 experimental women from Seoul and Manila.

But there were roses too among the thorns last week:

L. Hemingway, MD: "A sudden cataclysmic change in direction of 'being' occurs only once in each person's existence and this is at the moment of his conception. Prior to gametic fusion there is no person but only a sperm and an ovum. And these are destined to die unless they fuse. The two gametes, instead of dying, become a zygote which is destined to live. Development thereafter is continuous, uninterrupted, without any semblance of a dramatic change even remotely resembling that of fertilization. The natural span of the human person begins at the moment of fertilization and ends at the moment of death. The aim of medical practice is to keep these two events as far apart as possible."

And Father Vincent Miceli, SJ: "Where there is no ethic there is no law... where there is no transcendent ethic, no eternal law to protect defenseless innocent life, there will be none either to protect the lives of postnatal citizens. In a world where each woman's privacy is an absolute, we have created a monster society where, in the words of Kafka, each person becomes a sect unto himself and each family is under siege. Each lives on the defensive against the aggression of the state. For in such a society every human relationship is dissolved into fear, and *homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf unto his fellowman) becomes the order of the day."

"Bad morals cannot make good medicine, nor can good morals make bad medicine. Doctors therefore should keep certain truths unyieldingly in their consciences (including): Human life begins at conception. The human begins in question is innocent, defenseless and sacred. There is never any medically good reason for abortion. And sterilization of healthy organs to avoid reproduction is directly contrary to the aims of the medical profession and hence is always an immoral mutilation."

A medical doctor with the rare ability to present the honor of his profession with the grace of a poet, and a Jesuit priest applying the word of God to the scarred soul of medicine.

Spring 1975.

There is hope.

Agencies Stress Vietnam Relief

Directors of two national Catholic organizations reported last week that their groups are taking steps to relieve the suffering in South Vietnam.

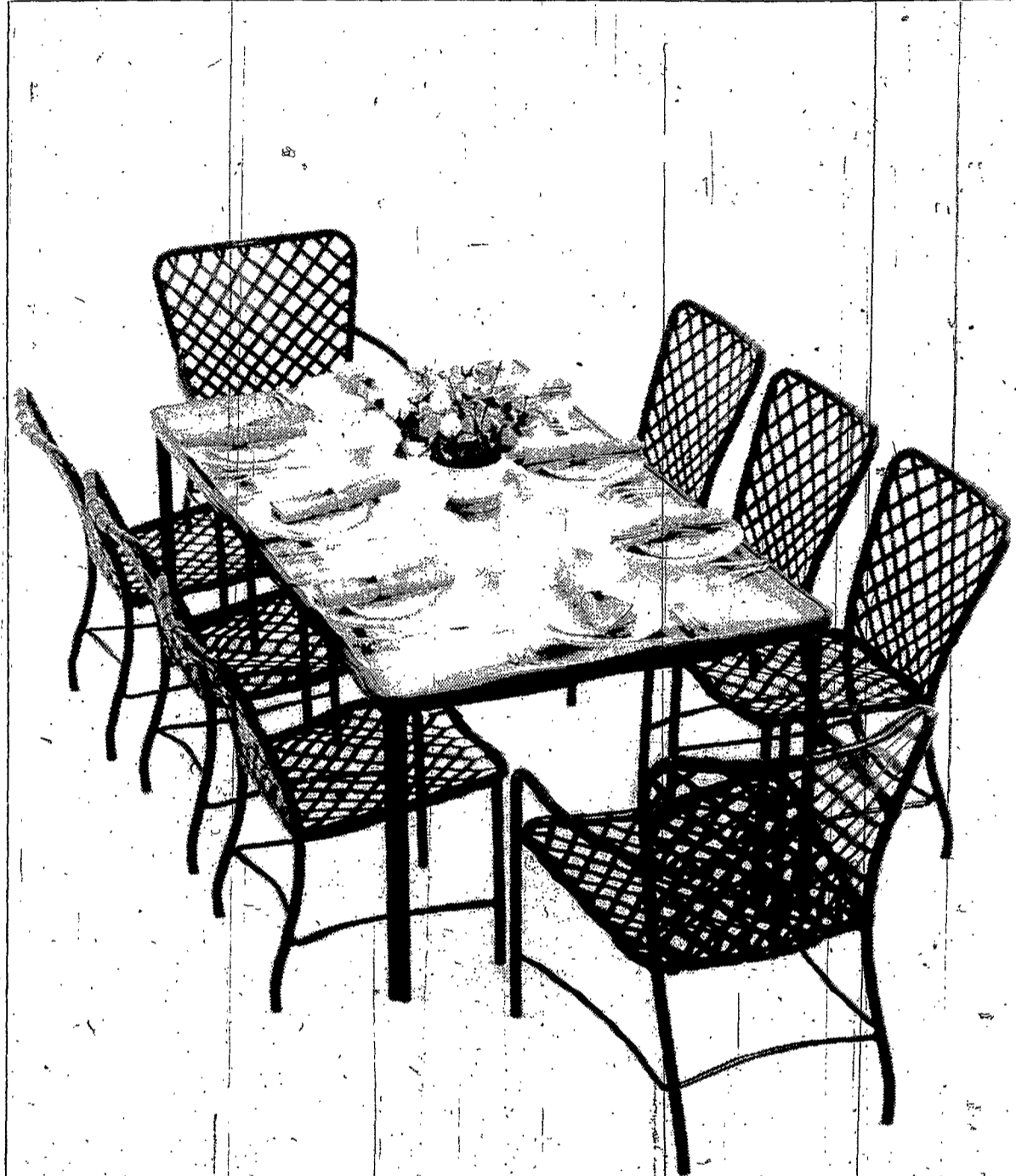
Father Francis W. Wright of the Association of the Holy Childhood stated that they have sent \$192,000 to Southeast Asia for child relief in recent months and are continuing efforts to raise funds to meet the present emergency.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is also working to develop a unified program of assistance for the church in Vietnam, according to Bishop Edward T. O'Meara.



St. Pius Dinner

Joan Peck, Dorothy Goldstein, Kathy Benwitz, Joan Donnelly, all mothers of St. Pius the Tenth eighth graders; and Thea Hamill, Thomas O'Donnell, Mark Contestable, and Mary Wark, eighth graders at the school, look over some of the goodies to be prepared for a dinner to be served Sunday, April 20, from 3 to 6 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Proceeds from the dinner will help pay for a class trip to Washington, D.C.



Capitol Letters

Despite proposed regulations published by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, December, 1974, which would have excluded abortion funding from family planning under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, states are still receiving 90 per cent matching federal funds for abortion because HEW is dragging its feet on making a final determination on the proposed regulations. A final determination would drop matching federal assistance to 40 per cent to 86 per cent, depending on state qualifications and whether states elect Title XIX benefits.

It is necessary to prod in order to reduce federal monies available for abortions.

Please praise HEW for clarifying that Congress did not intend family planning programs to include abortion and urge adoption of HEW's proposed regulation 45 CFR 249.10 (b) (4) (iii) which excludes abortion from the definition of "family planning services and supplies."

HEW should be strongly

condemned for "paying" for 240,000 to 278,000 abortions per year under the Medicaid program and approving abortion plans under Title IV. HEW should be made to understand that its plan as expressed in the proposed regulation preamble is totally unacceptable. **We must demand that HEW adopt a regulation prohibiting all abortions under all HEW programs.**

Write President Gerald Ford, White House, Washington, D.C.; Casper W. Wineberger, HEW, with copies to Frank C. Carlucci, HEW, Dr. Louis M. Hellman, deputy assistant secretary for Population Affairs and James S. Dwight Jr., administrator of HEW Social and Rehabilitation Services - P.O. Box 2382, 330 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20013; Sens. James Buckley and Jacob Javits, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510; your respective Congressmen, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Compiled by Jeanne D. Sweeney

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