



### Cooks Fete Teachers

Eighth graders at Holy Rosary school make last minute preparations for an April 30 luncheon hosting the school's teachers. Eleven students participated in the eight-week cooking class which culminated with the luncheon. From left to right are Tommy Markle, Mrs. Sheila Sedor, Linda Burke, Patty Huether, Judy Danno, Emma Scardino and Linda King.

### Life, Liberty and Law



Nancy Murphy

[5th in a series]

It was cloudy and cold in Boston during the entire Edelin trial. By mid February the jury had listened to six weeks of testimony - six weeks of conflict, controversy and contradictions.

They had heard that there were two clocks, one clock and no clock on the operating room wall, but had seen no evidence such as a ledger from maintenance department of the hospital to verify the condition and/or the whereabouts of the clock(s). They heard disagreement concerning the length of the gestation, with defense witnesses estimating 20 to 24 weeks as their medical opinions; and the Commonwealth witnesses introducing figures showing the weight and measurements of a 24 to 27-1/2 week gestation. The jury had been told by defense witnesses that the survival of a fetus in an abortion is of no medical consequence - no importance at all; and by the prosecution that a viable baby boy had been suffocated during the process of his birth.

The defense testified that the fetus had not breathed "outside the uterus," but that it could have survived a three minute retention within the fluid-filled cavity with no ill effects. The prosecution produced evidence that the three minute time span was fatal.

The jury heard Dr. Edelin testify that after the fetal heartbeat of 140 beats per minute had been recorded three days before surgery, he did not attempt immediately prior to the abortion to determine the status of the fetus because that would not have been in keeping with standard medical practice; and they heard him testify later that he determined the fetal death by "placing two fingers on the chest while passing it to the basin" - a procedure which took a "few seconds," he said.

The jury also heard Dr. Arthur Hertig, witness for the defense, testify that in his medical opinion all newborns are non viable, as well as all who are born prematurely and all aborted fetuses. They listened as Newman Flanagan asked Dr. Hertig on cross examination, "Based on your own definition Doctor, does

the medical community have a responsibility toward the non viable?" And the jury may have noticed the hesitation before the witness answered, "Yes, we do." The eloquently unasked question hung in the courtroom atmosphere. . . Did Dr. Edelin as a physician have the duty to care for the fetus viable or non viable?

In his final argument, his final words to the jury February 13, defense attorney William Homans Jr. appeared subdued, almost humble. He was tired and his voice at times was inaudible.

"It is necessary," he said, "to allow a physician to act according to accepted medical standards. Otherwise, not only Dr. Edelin but also your physician and mine and thousands of other physicians in the country will suffer. Unless you find that Dr. Edelin was some kind of ogre who was going out to terminate the existence of babies, to kill babies with some kind of malicious intention instead of a physician performing a medical task however pleasant or unpleasant it may seem to a physician exercising his own judgment I suggest that you find that Dr. Edelin did act in accordance with his best judgment. Use your common sense."

Flanagan on the other hand was vigorous. His voice filled the courtroom and his face was flushed as he referred briefly to the medical examiner's photograph. "Is this just a specimen? Are we talking about a blob, a big bunch of mucus, or what are we talking about here? I respectfully submit that we are talking about an independent human being that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts must protect as well as anybody else in this courtroom."

"But let's get back to Dr. Barnes" Flanagan said. "Dr. Barnes is a Rockefeller Foundation gentleman who got up here and said, quote, 'If you detach the placenta and you don't have any air for three minutes while you are in there, it won't affect him (the fetus)'. Well, I could stand here and ask you to demonstrate that by holding your breath for three minutes and see what would happen to you. Use your common sense."

Dr. Edelin wrote 'THE DAY' in big letters across the top of the yellow, lined legal pad on the defense table where he sat. It would soon be over.

His face reflected his continued confidence.

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### THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

Father Andrew Greeley says in an article quoted by Father Atwell that the Church is in the course of a "precipitous decline" and this is because people no longer listen to their leaders because their leaders have nothing to tell them. I agree with Father Greeley.

I feel that so long as we have Pope Paul and until all those medieval Roman Congregations of This, That and the Other Thing are dissolved, our Church will not teach the Good News as Jesus wanted it taught and therefore will decline.

For instance, the Teaching Authority [Pope Paul and the Congregations?] in the last few years has made a big thing of establishing or re-affirming disciplines such as no non-imprimatur books in the back of church, no altar girls, no Communion in hand, etc. Meanwhile Catholics are keeping blacks out of schools in South Boston and killing Protestants in Ulster, wars go on, and more than half the world is starving.

To be sure, there have been superficial improvements since Vatican II: a more realistic and attractive liturgy, better relations with other churches, a slight slackening of some of the disciplinary reins, and so on. Yet basically I think there has been little change; the same pharasaical legalism remains. Rule is still by decree and fear rather than by love and reason.

Father Atwell says we lay people are partly to blame; that we have been encouraged since the days of Leo XIII to take "active participation" in the life of the Church. How? Has anybody asked me how I feel about altar girls and contraception and many other things, trivial and serious? I am 71 and for over 20 years have been a

### Hicks

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Father Conboy



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2

"Good Catholic." What am I supposed to do?

Dear A.D.,

A few years ago nothing like your letter would get into a Catholic newspaper. I am publishing it for several reasons, despite the certainty that it will get some rather violent reactions.

Our Church is a Pilgrim Church - on the way to the perfection of her Master but still far removed because of the human element and the "sin of the world". To recognize and accept that simple fact is to be a hopeful person because we are reaching out to something better; it is also to be a patient person, allowing no discouragement and no prophecy of doom. Jesus will be with us to the end - the pilgrimage cannot fail.

What are you supposed to do? At least in our diocese we are aspiring to a high level of participation and shared decision making at the parish level in parish councils and at the diocesan level in the Diocesan Pastoral Council which will be convoked just two weeks from now. Small beginnings, yes; but hopeful beginnings too. Get involved. We certainly don't want to merely sit back and criticize, do we?

### BLESSED SACRAMENT

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on the first Thursday of each month at Blessed Sacrament Church, Oxford Street at Monroe Avenue. On June 5, the exposition from noon until 5 p.m. will be followed by benediction and the regular 5:15 Mass.

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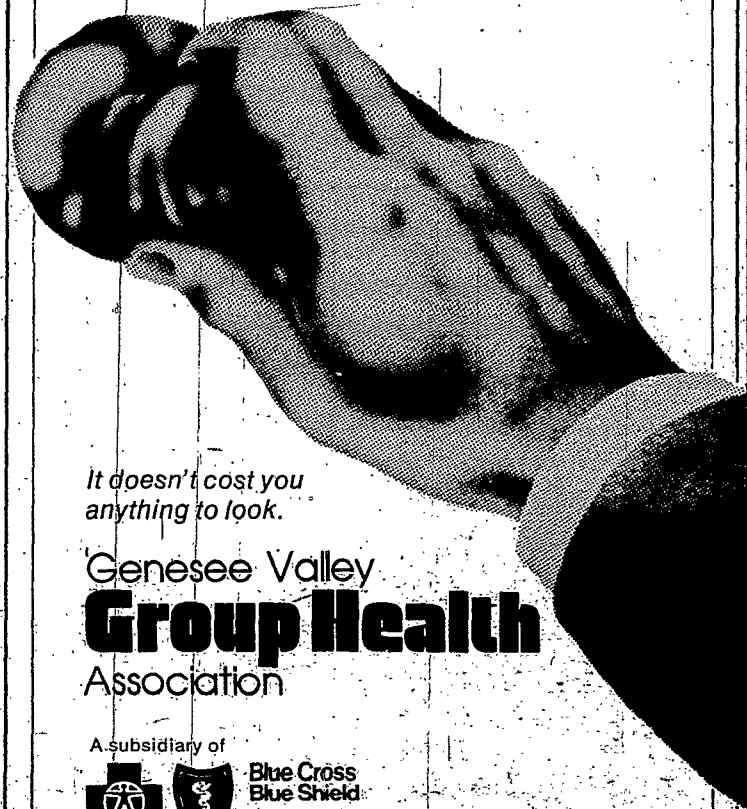
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