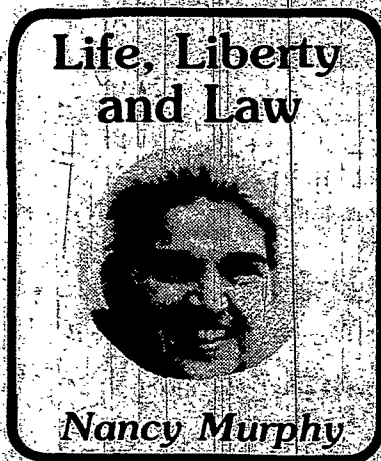


Italy's greatest woman basketball player has joined the convent. The attractive court star, Giovanna Biggi, 23, is pursuing studies in Parma, as an Ursuline. The Knights of Malta, who had charge of first aid posts during the Holy Year, recently reported that of the 8 million pilgrims to Rome, not one fatality from sickness or accident occurred there. The bishops of Poland recently issued a statement condemning abortion as "a symptom of the most drastic discrimination—the denial of the right of a human being to be born."

A new shrine to St. Elizabeth Seton was formally dedicated in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York at Christmas Midnight Mass. The shrine, which incorporates a bronze statue of the saint with a child, was created by sculptor Frederick Shrady. Warning that "today's extraordinary means becomes tomorrow's standard practice," Bishop Walter Sullivan of Richmond has urged his people to fight a proposed "death with dignity" bill slated to be introduced in Virginia's General Assembly this month. He said that the proposed bill could easily lead to the practice of euthanasia.



Hope is for sinners.

It comes after the realization, the personal realization that we have sinned through our fault in what we have done, and in what we have failed to do. Hope is our strength, our refuge, our motivation and our path. If our human nature were perfect, if there were no room for improvement, if we were free of the burden of concupiscence—there would be no need for hope. No need for prayer. No need for salvation. No need for moral absolutes.

But the ifs did not fail that way. And hope, perhaps the most human of Christ's gifts, is an absolute.

It is in this vein that I write of my personal hopes for the Diocese of Rochester and for each parish within that fold. In the form of General Intercessions, I hope that all of us will reach out together in 1976 to those who are in immediate danger, not of a denial of social/economic rights alone, but a denial of life and Lord.

I should have done this two years ago.

That we may see in the Birth of Christ the infinite hope and truth and dignity and worth of all humanity throughout the ages.

That we may see the hand of God in all human life, and have the courage to reach out and grasp that hand.

That we may listen to and be guided by the moral leadership of the Holy Father to accept the responsibilities of humanity toward

that we may neither support nor collaborate in any act which is designed to destroy human life, especially the unborn and the dying.

That we may come to realize that the right to one's life precedes any recognition of its social or economic value.

For the unborn, the lonely, the aging, dying, handicapped, starving and captive peoples (around the globe).

For our medical personnel, that they may always accept the heavy responsibilities of their noble calling to protect and preserve human life.

That we may receive such strength and vision as is necessary to resist the tides of apathy and indifference with respect to human life, both before and after birth.

That we will accept the words of the Holy Father that human life prevails over every opinion and that liberty of thought cannot be called upon to justify the destruction of life.

That we as parents will teach our children to follow the Magisterium of the Church and strengthen their wills to resist all sins of human neglect.

That no human life anywhere be destroyed through our having abandoned it.

That we will learn again to rejoice in the burdens of the Lord.

For the unloved, and the nonproductive lives.

For the unwanted.

For the unfed.

We pray.

Lord that we may see that hope is for the sinner.

Thank God.

In the Life, Liberty and Law column of Dec. 24, the price of the English edition of L'Osservatore Romano was listed as \$18.50. The rate since has gone up to \$24.



Dear Father

All my old Catholic books and magazines say birth control is a mortal sin, yet in the August issue of Sign magazine, Father A. McNally says "left to themselves, as they are, I can hardly believe God condemns Catholics who have turned to the pill or contraceptives. But I do feel a real sadness about it." I know many older women who ruined their health and good looks having baby after baby because they couldn't make the Rhythm system work and they are now very bitter. I can't help but feel the church has done enormous harm telling already overburdened Catholics they should either use Rhythm or abstain entirely. Some choice!

Signed
A.J.

Dear A.L.

It is difficult for me to understand what Father A. McNally means when he says, "I do feel a real sadness about it." Perhaps the next sentence would have thrown some light on the situation. Personally, I feel that the question is not entirely and rigidly closed. There are many individuals today who feel that when the Pope wrote Humanae Vitae he wanted to close the question for all time. Subsequent developments have indicated the contrary. Theologians are still, in some sense, agonizing over the problem. Also, a vast majority of our people have decided that it is no longer an issue in the sense

that they do not believe it involves serious sin when they have a reasonable cause, in their own minds, for using some form of contraceptive. It struck me as a little strange that you should mention the rhythm system with a kind of sarcasm or even bitterness precisely at a time when it is being promoted anew in various quarters, as being the best possible system of controlling birth.

I think the main thing we must remember today, as in the past, is that the church is not against the control of birth where that is reasonable. We are aware of the fact that in many instances today it is not only reasonable but even an obligation on the part of a given couple to limit the number of births. The method is the issue. I think that the vast majority of Catholics have said NO to abstinence, many have said NO to the rhythm and therefore many have seen a necessity of controlling birth, on the one hand, and no way out except contraceptives, on the other.

I know in advance that many people will write back telling me how disloyal I am to the church and the Holy Father. Maybe that is the sadness that Father McNally speaks of. I wish in no way to be disloyal but in having heard many sides to this particular issue, and recognizing that the Pope allows us to regard it as a not entirely closed issue, I find myself in this position. I sincerely hope that it can be resolved in the not too distant future to the unification, if not the satisfaction, of everyone in the church.

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Business In The Diocese

Prof. Jack Taylor, chairman of the Department of Economics at St. John Fisher College, has been appointed to serve as a public interest member on the Tax Advisory Reform Committee of the State of New York. Prof. Taylor is a native of Sheffield, England and a graduate of Oxford University.

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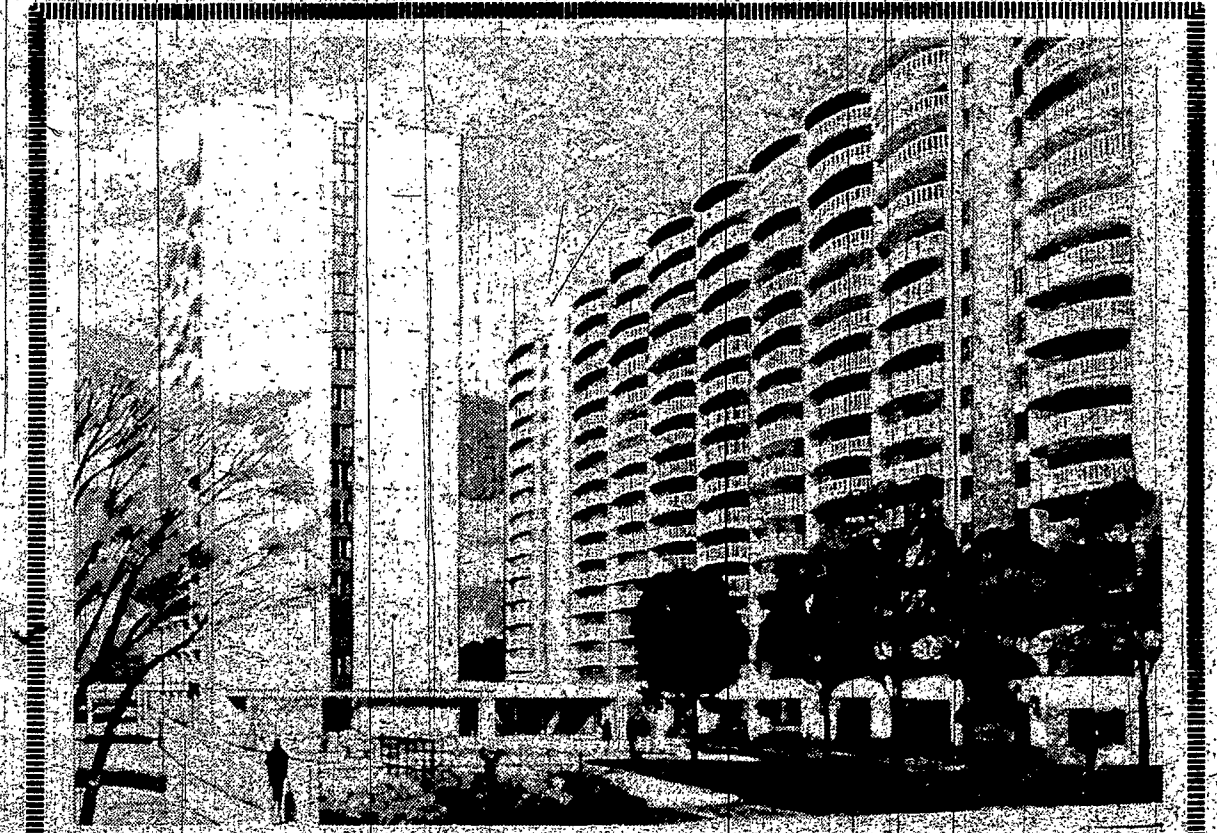
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