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## Will Catholics Back Jimmy Carter?

By ELLIOTT WRIGHT  
RNS Correspondent

New York [RNS] — Can Jimmy Carter carry the large Roman Catholic vote which has traditionally helped Democrats into the White House?

The question of Carter's appeal among Catholics was heard in and around the Democratic National Convention here, often in relation to the abortion plank issue and to the candidate's strong identification as an evangelical Protestant.

An analysis of New York Times/CBS News surveys indicated that the former governor of Georgia is having trouble attracting the landslide Catholic support captured by John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, the last two successful Democratic Presidential aspirants.

The Times/CBS data showed that at present slightly over half of the U.S. Catholics of voting age appear to support Carter.

A general political rule of thumb

is that a winning Democratic Presidential candidate needs 60 per cent of the Catholic vote, a figure exceeded by both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) received less than half of the Catholic vote in his 1972 defeat.

The analysis of the Times/CBS data, however, suggested that Carter is showing such strength among Protestants many of whom are traditionally Republican that a Catholic majority might not be needed for victory in November.

Some Catholic reluctance about the Carter bandwagon apparently springs from disappointment that the Georgian does not back a constitutional amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's liberal abortion rulings.

Carter says he personally opposes abortion and does not believe government should encourage abortion. His position is that the nation should work within the confines of the Supreme Court ruling to "minimize abortion with better family planning, adoption

procedures and contraception for those who desire it."

Such an argument is not acceptable to "right to life" advocates, whether they be Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox or Jewish.

Moreover, Carter is currently identified with the 1976 Democratic Platform which says that a constitutional amendment on abortion is undesirable.

"The politics of compromise are neither valid nor acceptable when the issue is that of human life," Chicago's Cardinal John Cody said in a July 12 criticism of the platform.

Cardinal Cody's statement came up in a Carter press conference on that same day but was misrepresented by the questioner as having made reference to Carter.

Actually, according to a spokesman for Cardinal Cody in Chicago, the prelate made the comment about the platform when asked why he declined to deliver the invocation at a fund-raising

event for a Democratic gubernatorial candidate in Illinois.

Cardinal Cody replied that he did not want to reflect negatively on the local candidate but had declined the invitation as a protest to the party platform's abortion plank.

The questioner at the New York press conference wanted to know if Carter expected to encounter "further trouble" with the Church.

After explaining that whatever event Cardinal Cody had boycotted did not involve him, Carter reiterated his stand on abortion. "I think it is wrong," he said. "I think we should do everything within the confines of the Supreme Court ruling to discourage it."

It was frequently noted in convention conversations that Mr. Carter's view of abortion is similar to that of President Ford and, if the voters have a choice between Carter and Ford they will be deciding between two candidates who personally oppose abortion, but stop short of a constitutional amendment.

A FUNNY THING  
HAPPENED  
ON THE WAY TO THE  
BICENTENNIAL  
THE  
RIGHT TO  
LIFE  
WAS LOST  
STOP ABORTION

Some 10,000 persons marched on the eve of the Democratic party convention last week in New York City to protest the platform plank which opposes any attempt to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn the Supreme Court's decision on abortion. Among the many signs and placards in the demonstration was the one above. The platform plank was approved.

### \*\*\*\*\* Random Poll

## Reaction Varied

By MARTIN TOOMBS

The Democratic party platform plank on abortion has created controversy in pro-life circles and has attracted criticism from many sources, including Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, president of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference.

The plank, which opposes an anti-abortion amendment to the U.S. Constitution, is at variance with the pronounced views of pro-lifers, including Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York, who said that "now, more than ever, we need a constitutional amendment" to reverse the Supreme Court rulings liberalizing abortion.

Random and strictly unscientific interviews with Catholics in this diocese reveal a varied reaction to Carter's candidacy in light of the platform position. All, however, felt that abortion is wrong and steps should be taken to end the practice.

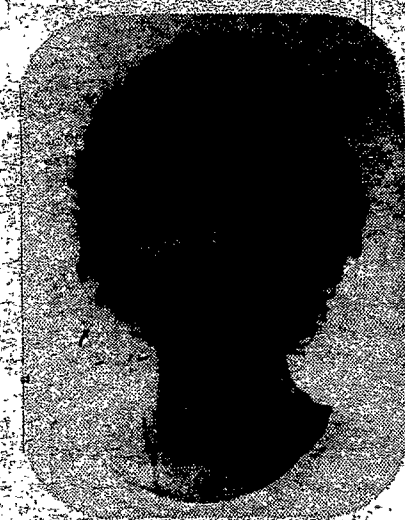
The question asked was "In light of the Democratic plank on abortion, could you support Jimmy Carter for president?"

Homer Bliss, questioned after the noon-time Mass at the Propagation of the Faith office, answered quickly "yes" and then explained: "I feel that I'll support Carter for a couple of reasons. I feel that it's very important to have a man who believes that laws apply to everyone and every group equally."

Regarding the abortion law, Bliss said, "I feel that those of us who don't hold to it should have an opportunity to have it changed. We have a rare opportunity to have this law changed by letting him (Carter) know how we feel. He is dedicated to the rule of the people. I feel that if the people let him know how they feel, he will change the law."



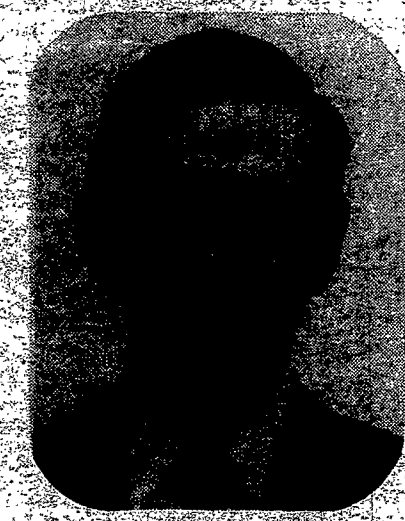
HOMER BLISS



JOHN ORLANDO



MOLLY SULLIVAN

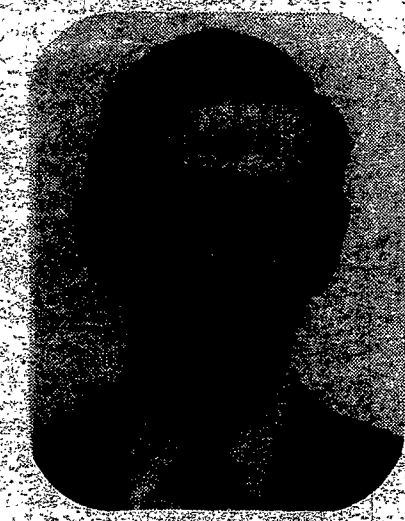


PETER FRANCATI

will be willing to support anti-abortion legislation.

He then added, "I firmly believe in the power of prayer, and we should pray for him, so he will come to realize the situation" and provide leadership on anti-abortion legislation.

Nora Coco analyzed Carter's position from another perspective, noting that Carter is personally opposed to abortion, but unwilling to follow through "by supporting anti-abortion efforts. She said that "too many politicians aren't willing to stick their necks out" for what they believe. She asserted that if Carter is truly opposed to abortion, "as a political leader, he should go out and prove it by supporting legislation



JOHN SULLIVAN

Her husband, Steven Coco, concurred, and asked, "If a

### \$800,000 for Schools

## 1-Shot Payment Helps but Other Suits Still Pending

By JOAN M. SMITH

Because of a New York State Court of Appeals decision on July 13, parochial schools throughout New York State will be receiving \$12 million in Mandatory Service Act reimbursement funds due them since 1972.

Rochester diocesan schools are earmarked for an estimated \$800,000 which will be directed to its 78 elementary schools and nine secondary schools.

Sister Roberta Tierney, superintendent of diocesan schools, sees the decision opening the possibility for hope in other legal suits between New York State and the private school sector. She emphasized, however, that this ruling is separate from the legal area of appeals surrounding the courts' unconstitutionality decision regarding the Required Services Act of 1974.

Though the July 13 ruling was a favorable decision for the private school sector it is offset by the June 21 ruling of the federal district court which rendered unconstitutional the 1974 law. This law guaranteed funds to private schools for the cost of rendering mandatory State services.

The realm of mandatory and required service laws has become a confused chain of events because of various court hearings, rulings, injunctions and appeals.

The 1970 Mandated Services Act

based on attendance records, to perform required state services. The law was operable for two years with payments made on a semiannual basis. Challengers to the act won a court injunction in April of 1972 against the second-half payment due that year. Then in June the court handed down its unconstitutionality decision in regard to the service act. It is this unpaid biannual sum which has been allowed by the recent decision.

The 1974 Required Services Act, an outgrowth of the mandatory law, was a more comprehensive law and it differed from its predecessor in that it released funds based purely on the cost of services rendered, rather than attendance, and specified services which included the filing of Basic Education Data System reports; filing principals' of secondary schools reports; administering and correcting Regents examinations; taking and filing attendance records. These funds have been negated by the June 21 decision.

In discussing the legal forays between the state and private schools, J. Alan Davitt, executive secretary of the Catholic School Superintendents Association in Albany, described the area of litigation as "a long drawn out affair," which he said, "is in the developmental period." He observed it is more than the constitutional question but the fact that "the courts have to come up with a more operative and realistic way of defining non-public school functions in regard to benefits."