

# NYS Assembly Rejects 'Living Will' Legislation

Albany (RNS) — The New York State Assembly has rejected a bill that would allow persons to make a "living will" asking that heroic efforts not be made to sustain life when death is imminent.

The measure, modeled on laws now in effect in California and Oregon, was strenuously opposed by "right to life" groups and the New York Catholic Conference.

When a show of hands clearly indicated that the bill was heading for defeat in the Assembly, it was re-committed to the Health Committee for further consideration.

Assemblyman Allan C. Hevisi, sponsor of the measure, charged that lobbyists had "misinformed some members" by

presenting the bill as legalizing euthanasia or assisting suicide.

He held that "if you believe that a patient should have the right to make the choice — then you support the bill. If you believe that a patient does not have this right, then you should oppose the bill."

Opponents held that "living will" legislation is largely unnecessary and potentially dangerous. Assemblyman James R. Tallon Jr. (D-Binghamton) said as hospital costs rise and space becomes limited, a situation could arise in the future where a "person becomes expected to sign this kind of document" against his will.

The Catholic Conference charged that the "living will" in effect "authorizes

the killing of a person" with legal permission and that such documents adversely make a physician "a servant of the statute" rather than an "advocate for his patient."

The Assembly's bill would have allowed a person to make a "living will" asking that life-supporting measures be discontinued in a situation where prolonging life would "cause loss of patient dignity and unnecessary pain and suffering, while providing nothing medically necessary or beneficial to the patient." Persons would be allowed to revoke the "living will" at any time by declaring it invalid or tearing it up. Physicians complying with the document would be protected from malpractice actions.

practice that is not approved. I hope that when the Council of Bishops next considers this question, their decision will be one of approval.

(Signed) P.G.

Dear P.G.,

Your letter came at almost precisely the time that the Bishops of the United States were considering the matter of Communion in the hand so I am placing it ahead of other letters which came earlier. At this particular moment there were not enough votes among the bishops to approve Communion in the hand but the vote was so close that the President of the NCCB, Archbishop Bernardin, decided to get the votes of absent bishops.

This whole matter of disobedience, especially in an area involving a basically approved practice, is a very sticky one. Sometimes higher officials are spurred to take positive actions only when there is a kind of "civil disobedience" which indicates that large numbers of their constituents have a very strong feeling about a particular matter. Even Canon Law takes into consideration such things as common consensus and immemorial custom as a basis for changing or evolving a new law. While neither one of those things is involved in this particular matter there still is a kind of parallel which muddies the waters. In other words, there seems to be a call to the bishops to do something about this matter.

Some of the indications which are important as far as I am concerned are these: More than 50 countries in the world have approved the practice; if it ever is

approved, it will be optional for each communicant; it is a matter of simple practice and not theological teaching.

There are so many other important considerations for the Church that it seems to me a shame this one should be a matter of division or a matter of concern at all. With you, I hope and pray that the bishops will indeed approve this and thus get it out of the way once and for all.

### BOATING SAFETY

Free safety classes begin this month for youngsters who aspire to power-boat operators' licenses. Those aged 10 to 16 can't get licenses without taking the course administered by the State Office of Parks and Recreation. Adults may attend the classes if space is available. Schedules for Monroe County may be obtained from Allen Becker of 115 Westwood Drive, Rochester 14616; telephone 663-3513.

### FULBRIGHT FELLOW

John H. Dengler, counselor at Madison High School, has been awarded a Fulbright fellowship for study and travel in India this summer. The area of investigation will be the emancipation of the Indian woman and trends in family life. He will be able to meet national leaders and other prominent persons.

Dengler has been a lifelong member of St. Peter and Paul parish.

## St. Agnes Garage Sale

The Gigantic Garage Sale at St. Agnes High School, sponsored by the St. Agnes Parents Club, will be Friday, May 20 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday, May 21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the school gym.

A bake sale will offer special weekend shopping treats. Sale items also will include appliances, small furniture, china, glassware, decorative items, toys for children, stuffed animals, games, sporting goods, ski equipment, bicycles, books, next-to-new clothes, plants and desks.

Chairpersons for this year's event are Mrs. Carolyn St. James, Mrs. Jane Horn, Mrs. Millie Howden and Mrs. Anna Krenzer.

## DPC Meets Saturday

Canandaigua — The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) will complete its second year with a business meeting Saturday, May 21 at the Sheraton Motor Inn from 1 to 5 p.m. Agenda items include a report from Bishop Hogan on the recently completed meeting of the nation's bishops, and reports on the Urban School Ministry Task Force, the Ministerial Review Committee, and the regional listing of facilities accessible to the handicapped.

The council members also will discuss how committees should report to the DPC, and the standing committee reports for the year. Bishop Hogan will offer a Mass to conclude the meeting.

The Ministerial Review Committee, which has been examining the diocesan spending priorities and the budget, among other items, is scheduled to turn over its functions to the DPC in June. The Priests Council has recommended that the committee remain in operation. The Sisters Council has offered several observations, one of which was that the committee's duties should not be given to the DPC before it is ready to assume them. The DPC Executive Committee has recommended that the bishop be asked to make the committee a responsibility of the DPC by September.

DPC meetings are open to the public.



Gladys Abraham discussing group organization at the leadership seminar for the diocese's divorced and separated groups.

## Seminar Draws Group Leaders

By MARTIN TOOMBS

Leaders of the diocese's 14 divorced and separated Catholics groups participated in a leadership seminar at the Nazareth Motherhouse May 7.

The 41 persons participating in the afternoon program included three leaders from the Syracuse diocese, active in Broome County, Syracuse and Rome-Utica respectively.

The seminar was conducted by Josephine Gray and Gladys Abraham, faculty members at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Sister Kathleen Kircher, diocesan coordinator of ministry to the divorced and separated, welcomed the participants to the first diocesan-wide program for the divorced and separated groups.

Ms. Abraham discussed group organization and the leader's role in efficient and effective group operation,

and fielded questions from the participants.

Ms. Gray concentrated on the proper organization of a meeting, and what organizers can do to increase participation.

Those attending the seminar also participated in workshops on program ideas, publicity, the role of the clergy in the groups, and getting men involved.

The group also discussed the recent vote by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to repeal the 1884 excommunication edict for those who divorce and remarry without an annulment of the first marriage.

In addition to the program, the afternoon gave the group leaders the opportunity to meet and discuss their programs for the first time. Of the diocese's 14 groups, only three are more than a year old, and only one existed two years ago.

### THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

In the past few months, I recall at least two items in the Courier dealing with the question of receiving Communion in the hand. In both articles the point was made that this method has not been approved for use in the United States. Yet in spite of this lack of approval, there is an increasing number of communicants who insist on receiving Communion in the hand.

I do not recall any diocesan directive dealing with this subject, at least not recently. Since this is not an approved practice, perhaps it is time for the diocese to issue a directive. Recently I attended Mass in another diocese at a church where there were a large number of Canadians present; the priest was very emphatic in his announcement, both in French and English, that while the practice of receiving in the hand has been approved in Canada, it was forbidden in the United States.

If you are still with me you may have concluded that I am opposed to this practice; actually I am in favor of it. What I am opposed to is the permissiveness that exists whereby the clergy fails to take a firm stand and permits the existence of a



Mrs. Jane Horn, Mrs. Anna Krenzer, Mrs. Pat Crowley, and Mrs. Carolyn St. James preparing for the St. Agnes garage sale.

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