

Diocese Establishes Group To Work for Human Life

BY CARMEN J. VIGLUCCI

In response to one of the "new directions" suggested by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan in his "Focus on the Year 1977-78" and to a Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. bishops, the diocese has established a Human Life Commission.

The commission is under the Office of Family Life which is coordinated by Frank and Sue Staropoli who also serve on the new commission.

Other members are Father James Hewes of St. Mary's Church, Canandaigua; Father Francis Blighton of St. Stephen's, Geneva; James and Mary Carroll of Spencerport; Sister Karen Marie Burmeister of St. Cecelia's, Rochester, and Sister Anne Michelle of the diocesan General Education Department.

Staropoli explained that the commission hopes to fulfill the plan of the U.S. Bishops which calls for a three-way approach to respect for life — educational, pastoral and legislative.

"We will be addressing such inter-related issues as abortion, euthanasia, prison reform, the death penalty and the aging," Staropoli said.



Frank and Sue Staropoli discuss future business for the Human Life Commission with Father James Hewes (center).

"The purpose is to show from a distinctly theological perspective that the value of all life is rooted in the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that we must be consistent about the affirmation of life in every issue," he said.

Bishop Hogan in "Focus" stated that "we affirm in word and deed the God-given sacredness of human life... our God believes in human life, hopes in it, trusts in it. As a Church we should do the same..."

"We need to speak clearly about our opposition to abortion. We must say that we are not in favor of solving problems

through the violent taking of another's life... but just as firmly I am in favor of taking steps to help pregnant women to meet the problems that the pregnancy causes."

Bishop Hogan then listed "other ways of respecting life" and mentioned helping the retarded and the handicapped and that jobs be found for the impoverished and that our political initiatives "be broad, clear and rooted, an affirmation of human life."

In a brochure suggesting parish-based activities the new commission reflects those directions. Under "Life and Death Issues," it lists abortion, "a critical subject — a must for each

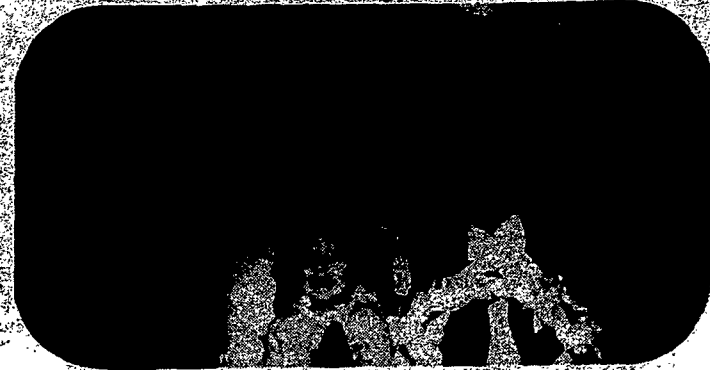
person to come to grips with in some way"; teenage pregnancies—pastoral care, "the abortion-related dangers to a teenager are developed, followed by a panel discussion of the options and avenues of help which are available to teens who choose life"; euthanasia, death and dying, a liturgically based, sensitive approach to the issue; capital punishment, "it diminishes us all."

Under the heading "Fullness of Life," the brochure lists areas where parishes can develop programs for the handicapped, the elderly, poverty-food, the imprisoned.

Staropoli said that for the time being, the commission will be concentrating on the pastoral and educational aspects of the three avenues suggested by the U.S. bishops.

"We are putting together an educational program right now," he said. To do this the commission is working with many organizations concerned with the same issues.

The Office of Family Life is an agency of Catholic Charities which is directed by Maurice Tierney.



Christmas Sale

The Women's Guild of St. Thomas More parish will have a Christmas sale Saturday, Dec. 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the school gymnasium, 2617 East Ave. Among those who are getting it all together are, left to right in front, Sister Judith Whalen, principal; Mrs. Lawrence Hudson and her daughter, Jennifer, and Mrs. Thomas O'Brien. Behind them are Mrs. Terrance Barone and Mrs. George Scardetta, chairwoman. They are showing Mrs. Hudson's contribution to the craft boutique, calico wreaths and pillows.

Retired Bishops Lose Their Vote

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Sixty-four retired American bishops will no longer be allowed to vote at meetings for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB).

The action, urged by the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops, brought the American bishops into line with other national bishops' conferences throughout the world. The NCCB had been the only episcopal conference that allowed limited suffrage to retired bishops.

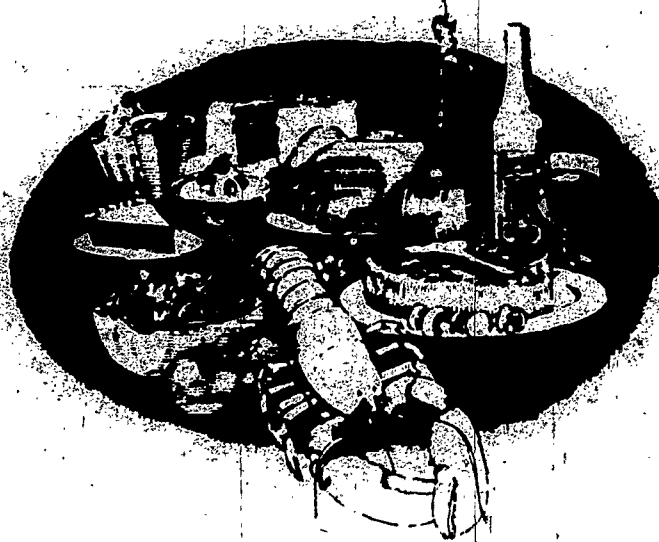
Despite pleas from several bishops, including one from Bishop Romeo Blanchette of Joliet, Ill., to avoid committing "episcopal euthanasia," the NCCB voted to end official NCCB membership for retired bishops, thus curtailing the retirees' already limited voting rights.

Retired bishops had not been allowed to vote on budget matters or major issues requiring a two-thirds majority but could vote on other matters. They may still attend NCCB meetings and speak on the issues but have no vote.

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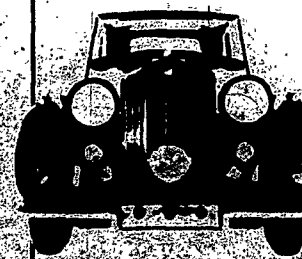
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