

The Church 1979

By Father Andrew Greeley

Anti-Abortion Sentiment Increasing

The drift back to church reported in this column is linked to a drift back towards traditional Catholic doctrine on abortion. However, the drift seems to be part of a slow erosion of support among all Americans for abortion.



Fr. Greeley

risk to the mother's health (between three-fourths to four-fifths, depending on the circumstances).

4) There are few differences in these attitudes between Catholics and non-Catholics; the changes in Catholic attitudes are paralleled by changes in the attitudes of other Americans.

5) Thus the tide seems to be turning against abortion.

6) But the tide has a long way to go.

In such an emotional issue as abortion, no researcher can report findings, even with all the above qualifications, without having his data distorted and misinterpreted by self-righteous zealots on both sides. I ask that such folk do not write or phone me because I will not discuss the issue with them.

For those interested in responsible research I will go on with more data:

In 1974, 55 percent of Americans approved of abortion when a poor woman wanted no more children. That percentage has declined to 47 percent in 1979. In 1977, 50 percent of the population approved of abortion of unmarried mothers. Last year the percent approving fell to 41 percent. In 1977, 47 percent of the population approved of abortion for a married

woman who wanted no more children. Last year the proportion was 40 percent.

These changes are all statistically significant. Moreover, they represent a dramatic reversal of a trend which had been building momentum since the late 1960s and particularly since the Supreme Court decision in 1972 overturning state abortion laws. What has happened?

The reversal is too new to say with any confidence what has caused it, particularly since the ideological support for abortion has minimized the publication of such research findings and the availability of funds to seek explanations.

My guess is that the pro-abortion movement has become the victim of its own arrogance and rhetorical overkill. Confident that it was riding the wave of history because it had a few court decisions on its side, it felt that the repugnance which most Americans feel for abortion was going away. It labeled the right-to-life movement as extremist, and never considered the possibility that many Americans found it even more extremist.

I don't know where the abortion issue is going. I would guess that it might soon be possible to get a constitutional amendment forbidding abortion after the first three months of pregnancy.

I must also comment that it is encouraging to see that the other side's extremists are even more counterproductive than our own.



Bread Box

Kevin Morisroe, from St. Bernard's Seminary, discussed the Macuspana, Mexico and Operation Bread Box projects with members of the St. Agnes Human Development Committee Andrea Brown (left), Marca Grattet and Carla Ducci.

Cancer Films Available

Films on cancer are available to local clubs, churches, organizations and employe groups interested in putting on an educational program on the disease.

Some of the films are "Breast Self-Examination," which shows the simple technique of checking for unusual lumps or thickening in the breast; "The Cancer

Nobody Talks About," a film about the diagnosis of cancer of the colon; "Man Alive," a cartoon feature, showing cancer's seven warning signals; "Let's Call It Quits," showing the humorous yet

serious side of a man trying to quit smoking. Any group wishing to schedule a Cancer Society film should contact Debbie Keeley at 461-3800.

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We can answer many questions for you about death. Call or stop in at your convenience.

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Happy Day!

Two women of Nabasso, Mali, laugh at a squirming youngster during bath-time at a village well. The Missionaries of Africa (MIA), led by Father Bernard Verspielen, a White Father and veteran of 24 years in the area, installed the well to help with a serious water shortage.

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