

Canon Lawyers Endorse ERA

Albuquerque, N.M. (RNS) — The Canon Law Society of America, made up mostly of Roman Catholic priests, came down favorably on the question of women's rights in both Church and state at its convention here.

Members endorsed ratification of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and urged the U.S. bishops to intercede with the Vatican to allow women to serve as judges in church courts.

The society, in a close vote,

also sought "favorable decisions" on petitions from priests who want to be released from their vows and become laymen. Pope John Paul II reportedly has refused to act on any of the petitions, which have numbered about 3,000 a year, since his pontificate began a year ago.

The resolution on the ERA followed two years of study and ardent debate. The membership rejected a task force recommendation that the society remain neutral on the ERA. The vote was 123 to 100 to endorse ratification.

The Open Window

By Father Louis J. Hohman

The Pope Is Not A Monarch

Dear Father Hohman,

I have recently become more deeply involved in Parish Council and I find a real difficulty in respect to the differences that people have in regard to what the Church teaches. It is extremely difficult to work in a council where some people believe one thing and others are at the other end of the line. What happens is that we get to arguing about small things which cannot be settled in any definitive way. One such example that comes to mind is whether or not to keep the altar rail in the church. How do we get past these disputes about Church teaching and practice so that we can get on to the proper business of a Parish Council?

(Signed) S. P.

Dear S. P.,

One of the things which we have not gotten across to Parish Councils up to this point is the necessity of

doing homework. It is not enough simply to attend meetings and to argue about the nitty gritty of parish management. It is not a once a month operation. While we realize that it is very important for personal and family life to minimize the number of meetings which any person would be required to attend, there is still much which can be done at home through the use of study material. Council members should little by little acquire a sense of what is essential Catholic doctrine, what is in doubt, what is changeable, what is Church rule, and what is simply long standing practice. To sort all these things out is not terribly easy but one who has a sincere desire to serve the Church in terms of sharing responsibility should begin to learn these things.

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Even among experts there is a great deal of difficulty surrounding these particular matters. There are some people who accept every statement made by the Pope or one of the curia offices in exactly the same weight as they accept every other statement. For one thing there are those who cast the Pope in the role of an absolute monarch in the Church which Jesus Christ could not possibly have intended since He indicated that the greatest among us had to be the servant of all. He had no intention of creating a monarchy. Witness what He did when they tried to make Him king. I do not believe that our Holy Father has any such intentions for himself. I think he indicated that quite clearly in his visit here. So the business of sorting out what is essential Christian discipline or practice is an ongoing process. Those who speak very absolutely in one direction or another — that is, in favor of every single pronouncement attributed

to the hierarchy as being infallible and permanent and at the other extreme of ignoring anything which is "official" — are simply not realists and do not in my opinion have a very good grasp of the meaning of Church.

The question you brought up concerning the presence or absence of altar rails is a matter of relatively little importance in the long run. On the one hand a standing altar rail can be a symbol of our being in the presence of the sacred. For others it can be a symbol of a caste system, dividing clergy and laity. The former shows forth the mystery of Eucharist while the latter (that is the absence of a rail) shows the involvement of all people at the table of the Lord. Present practice seems to indicate the preferability of the absence of the altar rail but this should be worked out in dialogue by both sides. For either side to say that the other cannot be right is out of the question.

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Nazareth Giving

Thomas and Nancy Garlick of Stonegate Lane, Pittsford, are directing the Nazareth College Annual Giving campaign, which has a goal of \$175,000. Mrs. Garlick, a 1960 graduate of Nazareth, serves on the board of the Women's Career Center and is a member of several community and church-related groups. Her husband, a graduate of Lemoyne College and the Georgetown University Law Center, is a trustee of St. Louis Parish, a former treasurer and trustee of the State Bar Association, and a member of the Lemoyne Board of Governors.



Harvest Dance

Coming up Nov. 10 at Bishop Kearney High School: the Harvest Dance sponsored by the Mothers Club and Fathers Club. Pictured at a planning session are, from the left, Brother Francis O'Brien, moderator of both clubs; Tom and Regina Solarek, general chairmen; George Alford, Mike Doyle and Tom Paris. Dancing will begin at 9 p.m., with music by Beer Barrel Brass. The price of admission — \$15 a couple — includes food and drink. Mike and Joan Doyle, 381-9243, have the tickets.

Scholarship Benefit Set

The interracial and inter-faith Mother Cabrini Circle, in its 33rd year sponsoring scholarships for black students to Catholic high schools, will have a spaghetti dinner at Immaculate Conception Hall, Sunday, Nov. 11, 12:30 to 6 p.m.

Profits will apply toward the \$5,000 tuition bill for 12 students in the program this year, according to Nola DeRouen, president. Cabrini scholarship efforts have been rewarded by the long list of successful graduates, many of whom have gone to college, some into the professions.

Dinner tickets will be available at the door, \$3.50 for adults, \$2 for children and senior citizens.

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