

# Medical - Ethical Terms Not Helpful, Jesuit Says

By John Dash

We need to change the language we use when we discuss such medical-ethical problems as represented in the Karen Ann Quinlan case.

Father Richard A. McCormick, SJ, widely-known expert in medical-moral theology and acting director of the Rose F. Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, said in an interview last week that "ordinary means" and "extraordinary means" when used to describe procedures in critical medical situations, are "relatively useless — and worse, they can be a cover-up for involuntary euthanasia."

The definition of "extraordinary means," he said, "is so relative that it hides the reality of the situation."

In the case of Karen Ann Quinlan, a young woman lapsed into a coma and was kept on respirators and intravenous feeding for a long while as her step-parents and

her parish priests debated in court and in the press whether such "extraordinary" devices be removed, and whether she should be allowed to die.

Father McCormick said, "the terms were so general, they were useless — and badly used."

Father McCormick was in Rochester to address Nazareth College's second annual "Science and Morality" program. He and Dr. Paul Millard Hardy, a neurologist and member of the Harvard University Interfaculty Program in Medical Ethics, discussed aspects of "The Prolongation of Life and Euthanasia."

Speaking prior to his address, the affable Jesuit who twice yearly publishes a paper for his fellow theologians on current thinking in medical-moral issues, said that the problem of use or non-use of medical technology should be based on what is in the "best interest" of the patient.

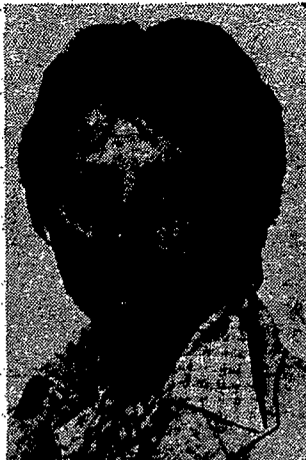
That in itself, he acknowledged, poses a number of additional problems, but it moves the ethical debate from having a base in an object to having a base in a person.

Father McCormick said that "ordinary" and "extraordinary" means have long been a staple in the vocabulary of theologians, especially Roman Catholic.

In a celebrated address, Pope Pius XII used the terms himself, and since that time the words have gained wide popular acceptance, even to the point of being incorporated into American Medical Association language.

Lately, however, Father McCormick said, a number of theologians are arguing that the terms do not meet the realities faced by medical-moral theologians.

He described the words as "very slippery."



## To Help Refugees

Marlene M. Brotz, a Xerox employee who has said she became "helpless" to her emotions when she learned of the plight of the refugees of Southeast Asia, has been granted a leave to work with the Catholic Family Center's Refugee Settlement Program. Ms. Brotz will help assess job and language skills of the refugees and provide job counseling. She is one of seven Xerox employees in the county on Social Service Leave.

### Garage Sale

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FATHER CONNOLLY

Photo by John Dash

# Vicar: Christians Are Creators

By John Dash

Father Neil A. Connolly is trying to enable Church people, out of Gospel motivation, to take on the agenda of the world.

And, from the evidence of the past few years, Father Connolly is in the right place to do that. He is the vicar of the South Bronx, responsible for a four square mile section of New York with a population equal to the entire City of Boston.

Father Connolly was in Rochester last weekend, visiting with friends, Mr. and Mrs. Dante Cardinali, and speaking at the Catholic Worker Community's St. Joseph's House of Hospitality.

In an interview Saturday, Father Connolly detailed efforts undertaken by the churches in the South Bronx to provide decent housing for residents in what has been described as "the worst slum in the U.S."

Those efforts, he said, by and large proved fruitless until the church people discovered "we were not really addressing the people's problems." He

said that what was really needed was a tool to "develop leadership among the people" themselves.

That tool was an organization, South Bronx People for Change, a program of training in "skills for self-organization and impact on structures."

The organization was started up in January 1979, he said, with a staff of one, and a budget of \$32,000, the major part of which came from the Archdiocese of New York.

Most recently, People for Change was awarded \$100,000 for its self-help efforts by the Campaign for Human Development, the largest such grant ever given.

The underlying philosophy of the organization, Father Connolly said, is that "every Christian is a co-creator. There is no escaping taking responsibility for creation."

He said that through the organization, "people are able to see in the light of their own dignity, what structures are liberating and what are oppressing." If the latter, they work to get rid of them.



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