

People and Events Of the World and Nation

ERA Ruling Said 'Justification' For Church Leaders

Suffolk, Mass. — Following a state supreme court ruling that the Massachusetts Equal Rights Amendment is not a legal base for re-instituting Medicaid abortion funding in that state, a group called Catholics Act for ERA has hailed the decision as a "major victory and vindication for church leaders such as Bishop Michael McAuliffe and Bishop Maurice Dingman who have long argued that ERA and abortion are separate and distinct issues."

The organization, headed by Sister Maureen Fiedler, RSM, charged several anti-ERA groups with "reckless rhetoric," in the course of arguing the case that ERA and abortion are linked. Sister Fiedler, following the decision by the court, said, "I hope that these groups will retract their distortions and inform their constituents of the decision and its significance."

Archbishop Works To Halt Abortions At Texas Hospital

San Antonio (RNS) — Archbishop Patrick E. Flores of San Antonio has given his full backing to a petition drive in this area which calls for an end to abortions at the tax-supported Bexar County Hospital.

"All of us have long been seriously concerned with the increasingly serious problem of abortion and abortion on demand," the archbishop said. "This most grievous practice continues today at our Bexar County Hospital where 538 induced abortions took place last year."

The San Antonio Right to Life Committee is seeking signatures and the support of all citizens in opposing the use of tax funds for abortions, except to save the life of the mother.

Abortion Fails, Baby Girl Is 'Doing Fine'

Phoenix — While doctors were trying to perform an abortion on a woman eight months pregnant, a girl infant was born and is "doing fine," according to Doctors Hospital here.

The woman had told doctors she was 19 weeks pregnant and an examination failed to reveal how advanced she was. On Monday, she was injected with a saline solution to induce labor and she went into labor three days later.

"The moment we discovered there was going to be a live birth, we took every precaution we could to insure the safety of the baby," said Dr. Robert Wechsler, a partner of Dr. Mark Gross, one of a team of gynecologists that operates the Valley Abortion Center here.

Pope Defends Time Spent Outside Rome In Pastoral Work

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope John Paul II defended his frequent trips outside Rome, as he announced his plan to visit the industrial city of Terni in central Italy for meetings with factory workers.

Speaking to 50,000 at the customary Sunday noon appearance in St. Peter's Square, the pontiff asked Romans to be "understanding" of his trips, reminding them that he had a duty to carry out his "pastoral services" to all Roman Catholics.

Haig's 'Theory' On Missionaries Provokes Outrage

Washington (RNS) — A "theory" advanced by Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. that the four missionary women murdered in El Salvador last December may have been "running a roadblock" which brought about their deaths has been met with anger and disbelief in the Catholic community.

Haig's explanation was the "most prominent theory" but "not conclusive" regarding the event, he told the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.

Both the Senate and House foreign affairs committees have been hearing testimony concerning the investigation of the women's murders. Before, the House Committee suggested there had been "an exchange of fire," leading many to wonder whether he was suggesting that the missionaries carried firearms. Later, he testified that he'd never met "a pistol-packing nun," and that he meant to imply there had been a crossfire caused by a panic among the armed men.

William Ford, brother to Maryknoll Sister Ita Ford, who was among the slain, said he and other relatives of the murdered women felt that the administration had launched "a very subtle smear campaign" to discredit the four American women.

"The danger in Haig's 'theory' lies in the possibility that lives of other nuns in foreign countries could be endangered," said Maryknoll Sister Martha Bourne. That the remark came from such a high official might lend credibility to charges that missionaries were subversive, she said.



LILLIAN R. BLOCK

Lillian Block Dies

Montclair, N.J. — Lillian R. Block, whose 37-year career at Religious News Service left an indelible mark on the field of religion, died at Mountainside Hospital here March 21 of kidney and heart complications. Her death followed a fall for which she was hospitalized Feb. 4 with a broken wrist and pelvis. She was 72. Miss Block began work at RNS in 1943 and was appointed managing editor and director in 1957.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

Microwaves Dangerous... To the Waist

Microwaves may not be injurious to your health — but they can be hazardous to your waistline.

It was last fall when my mother hinted that she and Dad would probably give us a microwave oven — that is, if we would like one.

Trying hard not to sound too eager and grasping, I replied that we would be, in a word, thrilled.

Craig Claiborne had written several times about how wonderful the veggies were cooked by this method — green, crisp and tender. And, I had figured it out for myself, the microwave had to be great for dieters.

One of the first things I did after receiving our gift was poach fish in chicken broth with a little lemon and sliced onion. It was heavenly and practically calorieless. Ditto the broccoli I fixed for my lunch. The same for the chicken or boiled dinner I made for suppers.

For a low-cal dessert I devised a single serving of custard consisting of low fat milk, one egg and artificial sweetener. It came out beautifully — one minute to scald the milk, one minute to cook the whole mixture.

Fantastic, I thought, looking smugly at the desserts in the cookbook that came with the oven. Who needs brownies and banana cream pie when there were such delights as baked apples, broiled grapefruit, etc.?

Then, two weeks ago a virus hit the family, not enough to put anybody to bed, just enough to weaken at least one person's willpower.

It started innocently enough one night as I made my low-cal custard and fixed chocolate pudding in the oven for the rest of the family. I licked the pudding spoon. Delicious, I decided. So the oven could do desserts well. Or was it just a fluke?

I pulled frozen blackberries from the freezer and tried a recipe which ended up in fruit cobbler. Delightful.

My eye ran down the page. Fudge? No, fudge would never come out as well as that cooked on top of

the stove. Well, might as well try it. In two minutes I had a dish of creamy, toothsome, very rich and very dark chocolate fudge.

At this point the head of the house suggested I get out of the kitchen and be creative elsewhere. I went into the family room and hemmed a skirt but it wasn't the same.

The next day I whipped up some Rice Krispie treats for the kids and then came across this recipe for special ice cream sauce and then...

I will not bore you with the rest of this tale. Suffice it to say that there is now a chain and lock around the microwave. I gave the key to one of the kids with strict instructions — give it to me only if I'm holding cauliflower in one hand, defatted wheat germ in the other.

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