

People and Events Of the World and Nation

Senators Say Life Begins at Conception In Abortion Attack

Washington (RSN) — A Senate subcommittee has narrowly approved a bill declaring that human life begins at conception, at the same time urging that full committee action be deferred until 1982.

The measure, granting unborn fetuses the full legal rights of human beings, could allow states to prosecute abortion as murder and thus overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decision giving women the right to terminate pregnancies.

The bill, reported favorably by a Separation of Powers subcommittee headed by Sen. John P. East of North Carolina, is regarded as a backdoor approach to that goal and vulnerable, as such, to attack in the courts.

But it offers the advantage of requiring only a simple majority vote in Congress, compared with the need of a proposed Human Life Amendment to win a two-thirds congressional majority and ratification by 30 of the 50 state legislatures.

Sen. Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, who voted for the bill in the 3-2 vote, said he will schedule full hearings on a Human Life Amendment before his Senate Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution. But, he said, the panel would not approve an amendment until next year. Several versions of an amendment have been proposed.

Bishop Reports Approaches to President on Nominee

Minneapolis (RNS) — The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has "made direct and lengthy approaches" to President Reagan concerning the Sandra O'Connor appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court, Archbishop John R. Roach has revealed.

Archbishop Roach, the conference president, said the bishops first did this when it became clear that Judge O'Connor was "a serious candidate for nomination" and when it was found that "her record in Arizona on the pro-life issue was questionable."

Writing in the diocese Catholic Bulletin, Archbishop Roach said that Reagan "has assured us and the nation that he has determined that her position on abortion is not incompatible with his own or with the Republican platform."

He said the pro-life groups "should be respectful of the right of President Reagan to nominate Judge O'Connor. They also must insist that there be consistency between the promises made in the campaign and the record of the nominee."

The decisions the Supreme Court will have to make during Judge O'Connor's tenure concerning life issues are too important to have anything less than a full disclosure of her past record and her current philosophy on human life," he said.

According to the archbishop, Judge O'Connor in 1970 "voted twice ... in favor of a bill to legalize abortion. Secondly, in 1974, she voted twice against the memorialization which would have asked Congress to pass a Human Life Amendment. One of these votes was in committee and the second vote was in caucus.

"Also in 1974, she voted against a bill which would have prohibited the performance of abortions at the University of Arizona hospital ..."

Bishops Unit Repeats Call for Pro-Life Amendment

Washington — The National Conference of Catholic Bishops Administrative Committee has issued a statement renewing the call for a constitutional amendment in

the defense of the unborn. Noting "remarkable pro-life gains in our society," the committee reaffirmed the U.S. bishops' position on a constitutional amendment that is "the only feasible way to reverse" court decisions resulting in ready access to abortion.

The committee also noted positive increases "in the level of public awareness of the humanity of the unborn and the inherent cruelty of abortion; in the level of involvement of so many persons providing competent and compassionate care for the woman who is pregnant and in need, and in the growing number of legislative actions and judicial decisions favoring the unborn."

At the same time, the committee expressed its conviction that a constitutional amendment is the only action which will reverse the Supreme Court's 1973 abortion decisions and "provide some constitutional basis for the legal protection of the unborn child."

Priest Federation Proposes Ban On Handguns

Chicago — In giving virtually unanimous support to a resolution proposing a ban on handguns, the National Federation of Priest Councils House of Delegates said it was expressing the pastoral concern of parish priests over "a most serious problem."

Father Neil McCaulley, NFPC president, in interpreting the 145-2 vote endorsing handgun resolution, said that "we are not safer because of handguns but because of our vision of the care of our loving Father. Priests who deal in day-to-day pastoral ministry are very much aware how momentary anger can be turned into tragedy by the presence of a handgun."

He said that "the tendency is that if we carry them we will use them."

"As spiritual leaders we realize that it might be much more important for many of those who carry handguns to reflect on the fact of the spiritual truths which are the true basis of our security."

R.I. Court Asked To Drop Prosecution In Death of Fetus

Providence, R.I. (RNS) — The Rhode Island affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union contends that an unborn child cannot be covered by the state's reckless driving laws.

The ACLU intervened here in the case of William Amaro of Fairhaven, Mass., who is charged with driving to endanger, death resulting, in connection with a Feb. 21, 1979, auto accident.

Kathleen Kenney, driver of the other car, was nine months pregnant and gave birth to a stillborn child. The medical examiner ruled that the fetus died as a result of injuries suffered in the crash.

The ACLU argues that Supreme Court Judge Thomas H. Needham acted incorrectly last December when he denied a motion to have the charge dismissed. He ruled that a fetus is a person within the meaning of the reckless driving law as long as it is capable of living outside the mother's womb.

Pontiff Greets Lourdes Assembly Via TV Address

Rome (RNS) — Pope John Paul II, looking thinner than usual, appeared on European television to deliver messages addressed to participants in the 42nd International Eucharistic Congress at Lourdes, France.

The 61-year-old pontiff had originally planned to attend the congress marking the 100th anniversary of the first such congress and had been scheduled to arrive in Lourdes on July 21.

Gunshot wounds suffered in a May 13 assassination attempt and a subsequent viral infection forced him to cancel his plans.



SISTER MARY

Sister Mary Weaver Goes Back to Selma

Sister Mary Weaver, SSJ, recently returned to Selma, Ala., after a year with the congregation's House of Prayer. Formerly known as Sister Felicitas, the Sister of St. Joseph has spent 16 years in the Selma missions, where she has served in various capacities including as a teacher, an outreach worker, a pastoral assistant and as a director of a neighborhood center program.

She entered the congregation in 1952, taking her final vows in 1959. In the diocese she has taught at both Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Lourdes schools.

Puerto Rican Festival Scheduled

The Puerto Rican Festival, Rochester's oldest ethnic celebration, will be returning to its original site at the Brown Square Playground when it takes place from Aug. 8 to 15 this year.

The day before the festival begins, the festival queen will be selected. Another highlight this year is the festival's dedication to the Year of the Disabled.

A parade will begin at 1 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 8, at Red Wing Plaza.

Maso Rivera, a widely known musician from Puerto Rico, will feature a wide range of musical entertainment throughout the week. Also planned are amusement rides, foods, and arts and crafts.

Mooney Grad Joins Players

Diana Georger, a 1980 graduate of Cardinal Mooney High School and a drama student at Ithaca College, has signed with the Tic Toc Players of Rochester. She has performed in "The Emperor's New Clothes" and is currently in "The Velveteen Rabbit." The Tic Toc Players concentrates on children's theater and is affiliated with the Nazareth Arts Center.

Free Concert

Radio station WNYR and Eclectic Design will co-sponsor a free concert at Ontario Beach Park at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 1. Featured will be local country singer David McDonald, with a special guest appearance by Ontario. The concert will be at the new Ontario Beach Park Performing Arts Pavilion. Picnic facilities are available.

Sister Frances Sweeney, SSJ



Viewpoint: Sisters Reflect

Pastoral Ministry

In the last decade women have been taking a more dominant role in the Church. Traditionally, the role of women has been regarded as one of subservience to the clergy. Changing concepts of ministry with an emphasis on the plurality of charisms freely distributed by the Spirit among the total congregation, lay and religious, have called for shared ministry by ordained and non-ordained. This sharing is enriching the life of parishes where women are serving as co-workers with priest pastors. The rapidly diminishing ranks of the priesthood necessitates the inclusion of more women in ministry to parish congregations. Trained women do an invaluable service in liturgy planning, organizing parish activities, counseling, ministry to the elderly, to the sick and dying, and to the development of community.

In churches which have large numbers of black members, women have special significance. Women in the black culture are looked upon as the cohesive force in family unity. Strong women, then, are a respected force in spiritual leadership.

Historically, the Church has looked upon ministry to blacks in America as a missionary endeavor — an extraordinary ministry. Evangelization of blacks has been a "conversion" of blacks to a traditional white form of worship. The subtle implication was that black people were being converted away from something, and that was from a culture, tradition and heritage which was not in itself significant, valid, or civilizing. An enlightened ministry to blacks recognizes the richness of the gifts blacks bring to the Anglo-European forms of worship which

have characterized our staid liturgies. In the Afro-American tradition there is no dichotomy between body and soul. The total person is involved in worship. Emotion and intellect complement one another. The movement of the Spirit is expressed in song, bodily movement and response to the preacher. The thrust of the black spirit is toward total liberation, body and soul. Whites who work in parish communities where blacks worship cannot become effective unless they are deeply immersed in the elements of black culture which are its unique contribution to society.

Ministry to blacks in a Christian community affirms both unity and pluralism. It affirms the need for a society in which all persons are truly regarded as equal. It will fight the paralyzing racist attitudes prevalent in our society. It will work toward self-determination for blacks in the Church — an inclusion of black priests, religious and lay persons in governing roles. It will affirm Black Culture in its worship services — that culture which can bring back "Soul" into our liturgies — that "Soul" which has been greatly inhibited by white cultural diseases such as Puritanism and Jansenism.

Sister Frances Sweeney, SSJ, is a member of the Pastoral Team at Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester.

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