



Right to Life members attending their national convention here in Rochester listen to Olivia Gans, director of the New Jersey Chapter of Women Exploited By Abortion. The organization, founded in 1982, already has chapters in 35 states. It is a pro-life group that offers a forum for women who have had abortions. Beside

Photos by Joan M. Smith

Ms. Gans is her mother Mrs. Mary Louise Gans who also is involved in the association. On the far right is Mrs. Eunice Vanderlaan a participant in the panel discussion.



## Right To Life In Rochester

By Joan M. Smith

Three hundred resolute and dedicated Right to Life members heard Bishop Matthew H. Clark tell them that "to raise a voice for those who can't is always noble. It is a mark of Christ himself."

The bishop, before addressing the Seneca Peace Rally, opened the New York State Right to Life Convention, Saturday, Oct. 22 at the Genesee Plaza Hotel where clergy, politicians, medical professionals and pro-life people hammered away at the issue of the sanctity of life versus the quality of life.

Father William B. Smith, professor of Moral Theology at St. Joseph's seminary, Dunwoodie, Yonkers, N. Y.

in his presentation on genetic engineering exhorted his listeners to reaffirm the sanctity of life within themselves, "to get it straight in your mind and engraved in your heart," because in the struggle between the sanctity and quality of life issue only one will win, he warned.

Father Smith, who has represented the Archdiocese of New York on the Phil Donahue Show, 20/20 and on several radio programs involving ethics, Catholic morality, public affairs and Right to Life, also warned about the genetic engineering used to foster the functional approach to what a human life is worth.

He explained that the

concept of measuring human life by his/her function cannot be restricted to the unborn but that "lots of people are in trouble. The new-born who doesn't breathe well, the lady in the iron lung and the elderly sick."

Illinois Congressman Henry J. Hyde (R-C) in his "The Privilege of Defending Life" keynote address to the convention, called the battle between the two ethics a "titanic struggle." It was an optimistic congressman, however, who talked with the Courier-Journal. He said he forsees a human life amendment in four years and his hope for human life legislation rests in changes on the Supreme Court. "A one man change in the right direction," he said, "could reverse the Roe/Wade decision," and added that he was happy with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's understanding of the right to life issue.

Congressman Hyde authored the Hyde Amendment which since 1976 has banned the use of federal funds to pay for abortions except where the life of the mother is endangered. Regarding this present legislation that is amended to a Health, Education, and Welfare bill which is legislatively renewable each year he said, "We're in a holding pattern. The most that can be expected is the continuing of the law prohibiting the federal government paying for abortions through Medicare."

Dr. Bernard Nathanson, author of "Aborting America," and one-time abortion clinic director, before his scheduled talk about his new book "The Abortion Papers" told the Courier-Journal that although science will make the whole abortion issue obsolete it will bring up equally perplexing questions that will pit the quality of life against the sanctity of life.

Other panalists and speakers on the conference agenda were James Bopp, general counsul for the National Right to Life Committee and attorney of record

in the attempt to overrule the Indiana Supreme Court's decision of no treatment to "Infant Doe" who needed a digestive tract operation to survive. He spoke on the legal issues of abortion. Jean Doyle, president of the National Right to Life Committee, gave a presidential message. Olivia Gans, Women Exploited By Abortion (WEBA); Reverends James Vanderlann, James Walter, Daniel Williams and Ronald Domina, Abortion and the Protestant Community; Terry/Sheila Holly, Linda Charles, Marcia Ritchlin, Personal/Family

Crises of Teen pregnancy, also were featured.

Awards were presented during the luncheon program to Jeanne Sweeney, convention committee coordinator and former president of the Rochester Right to Life Committee. She received the New York State Right To Life Volunteer Award for providing leadership and dedication. Father Smith was given the first annual Terence Cardinal Cooke Award for his strength and commitment to the right to life of unborn children such as was demonstrated by the cardinal during his lifetime.

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Bishop Matthew H. Clark was presented with a box of red silk roses, symbol of Right To Life, by children of members of the Right To Life Committee after his opening speech at the convention.