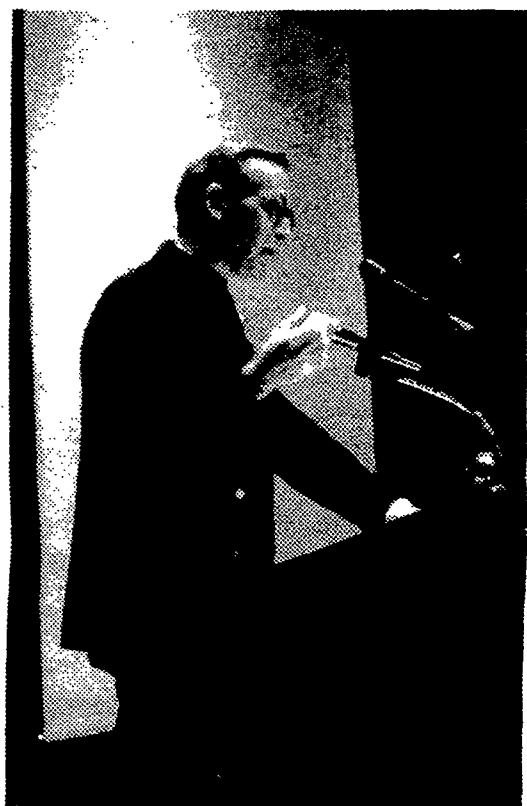


“We are not all equal in size, age, or dependency, but we are absolutely equal in one regard. We all come from the same origin and going to the same destiny.”

- Father William B. Smith



Bishop Dennis W. Hickey gave the closing prayer at the convention luncheon.



Father William B. Smith, who received the first annual Terence Cardinal Cooke Award, told his audience during his speech on genetic engineering that the traditional Western Judeo-Christian ethic on the sanctity of life "is in trouble to the core."

Genetics Pose Problem

By Joan Smith
 "Social engineering is preceded by verbal engineering," said Father William B. Smith.

The priest spoke on genetic engineering at the New York State Right to Life Committee Conference, Saturday, Oct. 22 in Rochester. He told his listeners that if they were to look in a pre-1979 dictionary for the definition of euthanasia, mercy-killing would be listed. However, if they were to look in recent dictionaries euthanasia, minus the mercy-killing label, is defined as painless, happy death.

In explaining the verbal subtleties that engineer public thinking, Father Smith explained that since

killing is wrong in Western Judeo-Christian philosophy, it is necessary to separate the notion of killing from the notion of abortion.

"Call it anything but killing," he said, and emphasized such cliches as "terminating a pregnancy," in the case of abortion; "the right to die" and "dying with dignity," in the case of euthanasia. "And," he warned, "the right to die," soon becomes "the duty to die."

Pro-choice was another word he said grabs people's attention, instantly bringing to mind one's freedoms and rights. "But," he observed, "the very fact that we have been born means we are

going to die," and asserted that courts, legislative bodies or organizations couldn't give anyone a further right.

Besides the verbal subtleties, Father Smith discussed theoretical manipulation, especially the idea that "in vitro" fertilization is a cure for certain fertility problems.

He agreed that infertility is saddening and frustrating but the idea that artificial conception is therapeutic, in the sense that it works to cure the infertility, is misleading. It treats the desire not the problem.

Father Smith explained there are two types of genetic engineering, the negative and the positive. The negative is therapeutic;

it works to cure diseases and remove defects. The positive is non-therapeutic, because it aims at manufacturing new or higher life forms.

Regarding the latter, he warned that if it linked up with the wrong ethic — valuing human life as a product and on its functional ability — "we're all in trouble."

He emphasized that the variety in human life was its strength. If we all had the same genes, he said, one bug could wipe out the whole scene.

"We are not all equal in size, age, or dependency, he reminded his listeners, "but we are absolutely equal in one regard. We all come from the same origin and going to the same destiny."



Indiana attorney James Bopp Jr. addresses some 150 people who attended a panel discussion of the Indiana Infanticide/Baby Doe case. From left, Rochester attorneys Vincent M. Barone and Judith M. Norman; local pediatrician, Dr. Lawrence F. Nazarian; and Father William Smith of St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie.