

Editorial

The ERA

When and if an Equal Rights Amendment is introduced to the state legislature, the State Catholic Committee will recommend a Sensenbrenner type amendment which will provide that the proposal does not guarantee abortion on demand or its funding.

State voters have already defeated the Equal Rights Amendment, but Gov. Mario Cuomo seems firm about getting it on the ballot again.

The very fact that people, including the governor, are opposed to an amendment to ERA leaves the uneasy feeling that the amendment itself will be used to further solidify and perhaps even fund abortion. If not, why is there so much opposition to the Sensenbrenner position?

Many have felt in the past that the ERA and abortion are not linked; this newspaper among them. In fact, Rep. Sensenbrenner himself supported the

ERA when it was considered in the Wisconsin State Assembly of which he was a member at the time. But things have changed; pro-abortion groups, such as Planned Parenthood, are using the ERA in states where it has become law to promote abortion. The March 9 decision in Pennsylvania which linked the ERA and abortion has left no doubt that abortionists will use, or abuse, the ERA.

The Rochester Area Right to Life Committee feels that if the ERA if passed in New York, it "would virtually make it impossible to change any existing anti-life abortion legislation or prevent passage of future anti-life legislation in the state."

Not too long ago, such an idea seemed implausible to many. Now it must be taken seriously.

The U.S. Catholic Conference will support the ERA only if the abortion exclusion is added. The State Catholic Conference is ready to take the same action if the ERA reaches the legislature. Indeed, the

state group has already lined up legislative support to react quickly to any ERA proposal which may strengthen the cause of abortion.

Congressman Sensenbrenner in a letter to the Courier-Journal published March 14, added the possibility that the Hyde Amendment which places a federal prohibition on taxpayer funds being used for abortion "would probably fall in a challenge under the ERA if the standard of review for sex classification was the same as the current standard for race classification."

As Archbishop O'Connor of New York City recently stated, it is difficult to understand the position of such politicians as Gov. Cuomo who say they are opposed to abortion but will not translate that into legislation. Question: How can the governor, or anyone else, champion any group's rights as a matter of constitutionality and yet ignore the rights of unborn human beings, including that most basic one -- the right to live?

and Opinions

Pope's Action Criticized

EDITOR:

It is with great displeasure that I have to write to you again. However, I feel that Pope John Paul II and yourself are asking Catholics both worldwide and diocesan-wide to take steps backwards in asking them to consecrate themselves to Mary.

In the Book of Acts of the apostles 4:12 "that there is salvation in no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved." In Colossians 3:17 "and whatsoever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father."

While I believe in the Immaculate Conception and that all generations shall call Mary blessed and that she was the ark of the new covenant, Jesus and Jesus alone through the mercy of God the Father is the new covenant. Jesus alone went to the cross. True, Mary's being was pierced and crushed psychologically and emotionally. It was Jesus who spilled his precious blood. Mary was truly obedient to God's will. Jesus was obedient to death.

I believe in the intercession of the saints but this universe, this earth, and most important no men, women and children, should be consecrated to none other than our Creator. Father God, the Saviour Jesus and the Lord Holy Spirit who gives us life.

To ask the people of the earth, those who are Catholic to do anything else is a blasphemy of God's word.

I'm not perfect but I look to Jesus and to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. I consecrate myself to them and to no one else. There is only Mediator between God and man.

I believe if the Roman Catholic Church is going to continue this way, it will lose many of its members who are faithful to God. I spend a lot of time defending the Church but I cannot in heart and conscience defend this action.

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Questions Unanswered

EDITOR:

I have just read two letters from Catholics seeking help on sexual morality; one to Dear Abby and another to Father Louis J. Hohman. Both letters received unsatisfactory answers. Abby was wrong, and Father Hohman didn't answer the questions.

The letter to Abby was from a married woman with three children who had an affair, got pregnant and had an abortion. She wanted to confess but was afraid of excommunication. Abby responded that if she were truly penitent she would not be excommunicated.

As I understand it, any Catholic who has an abortion or participates in obtaining one, is automatically excommunicated. Abby, not being Catholic, can be excused for such an error.

Father Hohman, on the other hand, doesn't seem to know whether masturbation, oral sex or "going all the way" are sins at all. With such non-guidance as this, is it any wonder that there is virtually no difference in the percentages of Catholics who contraincept, have extra-marital and pre-marital sex, have abortions, masturbate, are active homosexuals etc. as compared to the general population?

Father Hohman "cops out." In his apparent fear of

labeling anyone a sinner he fails to instruct as to what is sinful matter. Of course we can't judge the condition of a person's soul as the result of the commission of any act, but it is inexcusable not to tell an inquiring Catholic that masturbation, oral sex, and pre-marital sex are morally wrong objectively. The matter involved is sufficiently serious, so that if a Catholic knew this, knew the moral consequences, and committed the act with full consent of the will, he or she would indeed be committing a serious (mortal) sin.

Why doesn't Father Hohman know that masturbation is morally wrong? His Church tells him it is a "grave disorder." What kind of disorder? Physical? Psychological? Well, let's see. In what area does the Catholic Church have authority to teach?

Why, morality of course. Isn't it clear that the "grave disorders" must be immoral. Why then does he allude to other "experts" who proclaim that masturbation is not a moral disorder? Who are these experts who have more authority than the Church in Rome to teach on moral matters. I am certain that most Catholics who would read Father Hohman's column in the March 14 Courier-Journal would come away not knowing definitely that the three sexual activities are morally wrong, and would not see any serious reason for avoiding them.

I just realized when writing the name of your newspaper that it is not, as I thought, the "Catholic Courier." It conspicuously avoids mentioning the word Catholic in its title. Perhaps this accounts for the difficulty in finding Catholic moral teachings in Father Hohman's column, and in part for the abysmal knowledge of so many Catholics as to the rights and wrongs of sexual morality.

Yes, by all means, understand and forgive those who transgress, but instruct them clearly as to what is morally evil so they are better equipped to avoid the evil.

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Eucharistic Norms

EDITOR:

Having read Pope John Paul's Apostolic Letter "Dominicae Cenae," which was written to all the bishops of the church on the Mystery and Worship of the Holy Eucharist (2-24-80) and "Inaestimabile Donum," an instruction prepared by the

Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship (approved by the pope on 4-17-80 and confirmed with his own authority and ordered published and observed by all concerned) and the letter written by the now archbishop of New York, John J. O'Connor, to his priests when he was bishop of Scranton, I would like to share some of the contents.

In Inaestimabile Donum, it states "that the faithful, whether religious or lay, who are authorized as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist can distribute communion only when there is no priest, deacon or acolyte, when the priest is impeded by illness or advanced age, or when the number of faithful going to Communion is so large as to make the celebrator of Mass excessively long."

Also in Inaestimabile Donum, it is stated "with regard to the manner of going to Communion, the faithful can receive it either kneeling or standing in accordance with the norms laid down by the Episcopal conference." (I wonder how many Catholics have either seen or heard these norms?) I cannot remember hearing from the pulpit that when receiving Communion standing, a sign of reverence should be made prior to receiving it.

In Dominicae Cenae, our Holy Father speaks to his priests thusly, "Upon all of us who, through the grace of God, are ministers of the Eucharist, there weighs a particular responsibility for the ideas and attitudes of our brothers and sisters who have been entrusted to our pastoral care. It is our vocation to nurture, above all by personal example, every healthy manifestation of worship toward Christ present and operative in that sacrament of love. May God preserve us from acting otherwise and weakening that worship by 'becoming unaccustomed' to various manifestations and forms of Eucharistic worship which expresses perhaps a 'traditional' but healthy piety and which express above all that 'sense of the faith' possessed by the whole people of God, as the Second Vatican Council recalled."

Archbishop O'Connor stated, "There seems to be some misunderstanding about what the Holy See has approved. We do not have approval to distribute the Eucharist under both species whenever desired. The practice is specifically restricted to special occasions, to particular groups, to man-



"I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO PRAY OUT HERE WHILE CLASSES ARE GOING ON."

ageable circumstances. It is normally not authorized for Sundays." He also stated that "people must be given the option of receiving the Sacred Host on the tongue or in the hand. There must be absolutely no pressure exerted in this matter. Further, some few individuals seem to prefer kneeling. It is foolish to deny them this opportunity. Ethnic and cultural traditions have their own value, as do certain spiritual orientations. It is difficult to imagine that the occasional individual who prefers to kneel is a major disruption to orderly distribution of the Sacred Host. To argue about this on the basis of advancing the spirit of Vatican II seems specious. Indeed a major thrust of Vatican II is that we offer our people some reasonable options, rather than arbitrarily impose our will on them in every phase of their spiritual lives."

Our Blessed Lord told Peter, "Feed my sheep." I believe it is time for the sheep to be fed in our day with proper Roman Catholic instruction which is in line with our Holy Father and Holy Mother church and to depart from the theories of Messers Brown, Kueng, Curran, McBrien and others.
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Reagan Hurting Southern Tier

EDITOR:

I read with interest the Southern Tier residents' replies to Sister Mary Jean Smith's "blast" at President

Reagan's State of the Union address. Perhaps these readers have not taken a good hard, long look at the Southern Tier, for if they did, they would realize how greatly it has suffered under the present administration. The Southern Tier has always been a poor area and this has intensified greatly in the past three years. People have lost jobs, unemployment benefits have run out, food pantries can barely keep up with the number of calls for help, and children and women have lost government benefits. It is easy for those who "have" to be blind to the needs of the "have nots," but once we come out of our ivory towers, the poverty and despair around us is shocking.

I agree that abortion is an important issue but to be pro-life encompasses much more, as the bishops have reminded us. When I look at Reagan's track record of cutting social programs for the children and elderly, his attitude toward civil rights and the death penalty and his determination to spend more and more on the nuclear arms race rather to promote peace and improve the quality of life on earth, I see a man who pays "lip service" to Christian ideals. It was Christ, remember, who said, "That which you do for the least of my brothers, that you do unto me." We need a president who believes this, and does not cater to the ideals of the white, upper middle class Americans.

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Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union S., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.