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Bishops Plead with Public Officials To Lead Struggle against Abortion

'We Fail to See the Logic of Those Who Contend: I Am Opposed To Abortion, but I Will Not Impose My Personal Views on Others'

U.S. Bishops Offer Advice, Page 24
By Carmen J. Viglucci

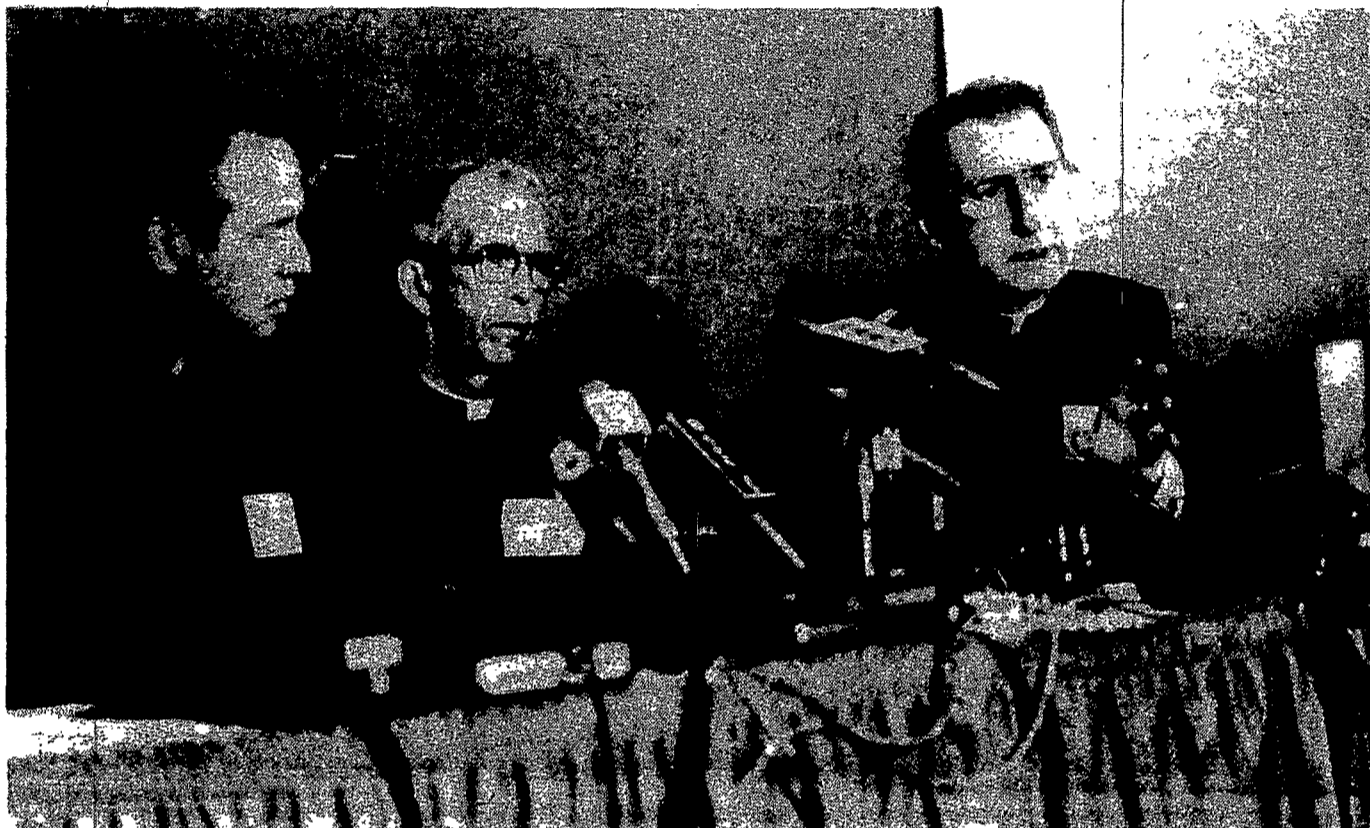


Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Archbishop O'Connor of New York City makes a point at press conference last Friday. Also on the dais were Bishop Clark of Rochester, host to the conference of bishops, and Bishop Daly of Rockville Centre, chairman of the provincial meetings.

The bishops of New York State used their annual Spring meeting here last week as forum for releasing a strong pro-life statement directed toward politicians, "Government Officials and the Support of Human Life."

The 1100-word statement, prepared by the ordinaries of the eight state dioceses for the State Catholic Conference, begins by praising "those willing to shoulder responsibility in government and public service work under heavy pressures and face great difficulties in the conduct of their public lives."

"We the bishops of New York State," the statement continues, "would like to acknowledge with praise the service of those who hold local, state and national office and those many others who spend their daily lives making their government work."

The bishops then state that "the enhancement of life is one of the chief tasks of government" and say that more and more people seek "to change in the world community those conditions of injustice, widespread poverty and the deprivation of freedom and human rights which breed war."

While the bishops decry the many evils of life, such as poverty, injustice and the deprivation of human rights, there is no doubt that its aim is to zero in on abortion.

At the downtown Holiday Inn news conference where the statement was released, Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York City, president of the State Catholic Conference, referred in particular to one segment of the statement: "We fail to see how office holders can escape their responsibility in this grave matter. Particularly we fail to see the logic of those who contend: 'I am personally opposed to abortion but I will not impose my personal views on others.' That position is radically inconsistent because a third party's right is at stake. It is the same as a nineteenth century legislator saying: 'I am personally opposed to slavery but I support the right of others to hold slaves if they choose.'"

"The analogy is all the more appropriate when we recall that the Supreme Court, in its Dred Scott Decision, said that blacks were not citizens with rights. If people of influence had not acted on their moral conviction to oppose that decision, slavery would still be the law of the land."

Archbishop O'Connor stressed to media members at the news conference: "We call upon all in public office and positions of authority to oppose legalized abortion by support of a constitutional amendment. We plead with them to lead the struggle against abortion in our state and nation. We urge them to stand up for the sacredness of every human life. We urge them to advocate legislation to inhibit and eliminate the killing of unborn children. We ask them to provide every available service and encouragement to pregnant women who wish to see their children born."

Abortion Issue in Limelight

By Carmen J. Viglucci
More than the new archbishop of New York City, John J. O'Connor, was introduced to Rochester last week when the bishops of New York State convened at the Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn downtown. "Penance and Reconciliation" was the theme of the

Spring provincial meeting but abortion quickly became the main topic for a large turnout of the news media at a press conference Friday when "Government Officials and the Support of Human Life," a strong 1100-word, anti-abortion statement, was released.

Under the guidance of

Archbishop O'Connor, the statement by the state's bishops quickly became the focal point of the news meeting. Indeed, only the topic of tuition tax credits was to share in the discussion and that on a minor level.

Archbishop O'Connor, president of the State Catholic Conference, shared

the dais with the host Bishop Matthew H. Clark and Auxiliary Bishop James J. Daly of Rockville Centre, chairman for the provincial meetings.

In much the same sequence of the statement itself, Archbishop O'Connor began by lauding officials "who take
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Nazareth Hall Celebrates 100 Years

Pre-schoolers and kindergartners hold hands during the anniversary liturgy celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark last Tuesday, April 3, at the Nazareth Hall gymnasium. The private elementary school, staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph, celebrates its 100th birthday this year. A history of the school and more photos of the celebration are on Page 20.



Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Shortage of Priests Becoming Nationwide Problem Page 18