

Editorials

Profiles

Somehow the situation concerning the new Equal Rights Amendment battle in this state must be comforting for those politicians who consistently endorse abortion by saying they are opposed to it but are loathe to do anything about it out of sensitivity to the principles of others. The ERA passed its first hurdle in the Assembly last week and many elected officials opposed the abortion disclaimer offered by Assemblyman Gary Proud because it would confuse the argument.

Before the ERA again reaches the voters who have already rejected it, it must pass two separate legislatures. Given this perspective, the political expediency of those who voted for it last week is dazzling clear. One could oppose the abortion exclusion -- not because one is pro-abortion, but only because it dims the chances for a fair fight over ERA. One can vote for ERA because this vote is not conclusive and in the interest of fair play the question only will be kept alive for future discussion. And one does not incur the wrath of either the governor or the leadership of the legislature, all of whom are pushing for ERA.

Only cavemen, and probably not all of them, would oppose genuine equal rights for women. But it is highly debatable that the current amendment will assure that, particularly in that its language is so simple that it is open to all sorts of interpretation, including the recent Pennsylvania instance in which a judge said that it allows for public funding for abortion. So, obviously, the ERA, in its present language, is no longer the pure and simple advocate for women it once seemed to so many adherents.

Add to this the fact that it has already been defeated in a bitter 1975 confrontation in this state and now looms as an even more divisive issue. It seems foolhardy, as well as expensive, for the governor and legislative leaders to resume the slashing, particularly without any modification in the basic language. A chance survives that the proposal might be amended when it faces its next fight, in the Senate. Sen. John Marchi will introduce the abortion exclusion and if the Senate approves it, the battle will begin all over again. Citizens should let their senators know their positions quickly as the measure appears on a political railroad at the behest of the governor and legislative leaders.

And what rankles anti-abortion folks even more is

the fact that while our politicians, led in this instance by Gov. Mario Cuomo, can cavalierly ignore the rights of the unborn to avoid bruising voters can on the other hand try to cram this potentially dangerous bill down everyone's throat. What is the difference? Is it between who is doing the cramming? Is it between whose throat is being violated?

Or is it between those who are able to vote and those who cannot? If unborn people could cast ballots, would politicians suddenly find the guts to push for their rights, too?

Hypocrisy also seems to be involved. At least those politicians who openly and sincerely support abortion are acting out of principle. But what must be the judgment on those who know that abortion is the eradication of human beings and still stand by? It may appease many present-day voters but what about history?

Sadly, if John F. Kennedy's book, "Profiles in Courage," were to be expanded there would be a dearth of candidates among modern politicians as far as the abortion problem is concerned. "Profiles in Political Pragmatism," however, would be voluminous.

and Opinions

Human Rights Ignored

EDITOR:

The U.S. Justice Department filed a brief on April 24, 1984, in litigation concerning the Pennhurst State School for the mentally retarded in Pennsylvania which asserts that "patients have no substantive constitutional rights to habilitation." A few years ago, the department had argued that "the lack of habilitation affirmatively harms residents of Pennhurst and is inconsistent with the purpose of confinement."

During the 1970s, in response to exposes of deplorable institutional changes, the U.S. Justice Department wanted to become more involved in upgrading our institutions and sought the necessary statutory authority to accomplish this. As a result, Congress in 1980 enacted legislation that empowers the Justice Department to initiate lawsuits to protect the rights of citizens confined to mental, geriatric, juvenile and penal institutions.

But, as one former Justice Department attorney testified last year before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on the handicapped, "the motivating concern of today's Justice Department is to ease up on the states and to ease off on asserting the constitutional rights of handicapped citizens." In similar fashion, the year after passage of the Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, U.S. Atty. Gen. William F. Smith declared that the Justice Department will no longer attempt to impose "a predetermined set of minimum standards" on state and local prison or jail management.

When the legislation described above was enacted, one of its sponsors, Sen. Birch Bayh, said: "To my colleagues who say that this is a states' rights issue pure and simple, my only response can be that this is a human rights issue, a human being issue, a United States citizen issue."

This is something the Justice Department must not forget.

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Holy Spirit Is Not Dead

EDITOR:

The Catholic Church has undergone various stages of growth and failures down through the centuries. We should learn from history and be careful not to quench the movements of the Holy Spirit when it tries to move in the Church and grow in its members. The signs of the working of the Spirit are true brotherly love among each member, overflowing to all outside the Church as well, a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and, above all, a true commitment to the Blessed Trinity -- God the Father, God the Son (Jesus - True God, True Man) and the Holy Spirit. If any of these signs are missing, the Church has fallen into error.

All heresies stem from an emphasis of either stressing the Humanity of Jesus over the Divinity, or the Divinity of Jesus at the expense of His Humanity, which is expressed in our Liturgy, the soul of the Church. That is why it is vital that strict guidelines should be enforced and adhered to and not be at the whim of the individual celebrant. If there isn't a perfect balance or harmony between the Humanity and Divinity of Christ, bizarre aberrations occur as evidenced in some of our so-called "modern" churches today. One just has to study the heresies of the past to make this point very clear, such as the heresies of Gnosticism, Arianism and Catharism, to mention a few.

Every Catholic has friends who have become one of the new "born agains" and who now go around questioning others, "Are you really saved?", thinking that this is the only criteria for salvation. They have completely forgotten charity towards those who think differently and condemn those as lost if they do not agree with them. They are now ashamed to acknowledge Mary as the Mother of God, completely forgetting that Mary can never be erased from Church liturgy...although pseudo-intellectuals have tried in the past to accomplish this, but have miserably failed.

Our Lady always prevails over Satanic powers. She will always be the Mother of Jesus (True Man-True God)

and her role in the True Church can never be diminished. As C.S. Lewis once said, "Anyone who denies Mary is like Satan's hiss from hell."

Former Catholics, now "born agains," do not realize that the Catholic liturgy is based on the Scriptures and act as if they have just discovered the Bible for the first time. It is clearly evident that they have never discovered their own treasure (the liturgy); alas, through faulty teachers, and have found what they hungered for somewhere else...in partial truth rooted in error.

The Holy Spirit is not dead in the Catholic Church...it is very much alive, but some of its members are still asleep. The renewal was meant to awaken its sleepy members, not to change them into heretics by "listening with itching ears to false doctrines." They should be open to the Spirit in order to take on their full commitment to Christ, become alive in their faith through daily, moment-by-moment living of it, so that it will burn brightly and thus be an inspiration to all...and then growth in Christ will be possible.

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Fight Abortion At Church Level

EDITOR:

In regards to "Bishops Plead with Public Officials to Lead Struggle against Abortion" (C-J, 4/11/84), as Christians we are called to be activists but too often we interpret that call as one to be just lobbyists. Legislation and public service are needed to eliminate abortion but the government is not our only recourse nor should the resolution of this important issue be made vulnerable to the vicissitudes of public office.

I feel that the entire Christian community should shoulder much more of the responsibility. This might be done via the network of well-publicized shelters and adoption services for mothers with unwanted pregnancies. Apparently abortion has become so accessible and convenient it has become "the method of choice" for resolving an unwanted pregnancy.

If the Christian community can make birth and adoption a more viable option, a Christian solution more pow-

erful than government control and public service can be reached -- this against a backdrop of hundreds of childless couples longing to complete their families but finding the number of adoptable children too limited. Desperate advertisements written by these couples to unwed mothers are seen in the press weekly.

The network which I propose should include more than just church facilities and monies. Church members should be invited to get involved by each family temporarily opening their home to a mother with an unwanted pregnancy.

If we turn to ourselves rather than our politicians to eliminate abortion, we will be able to realize many opportunities for charity and grace. Let us work for a Christian solution.

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Cuomo's Bills Two-Faced?

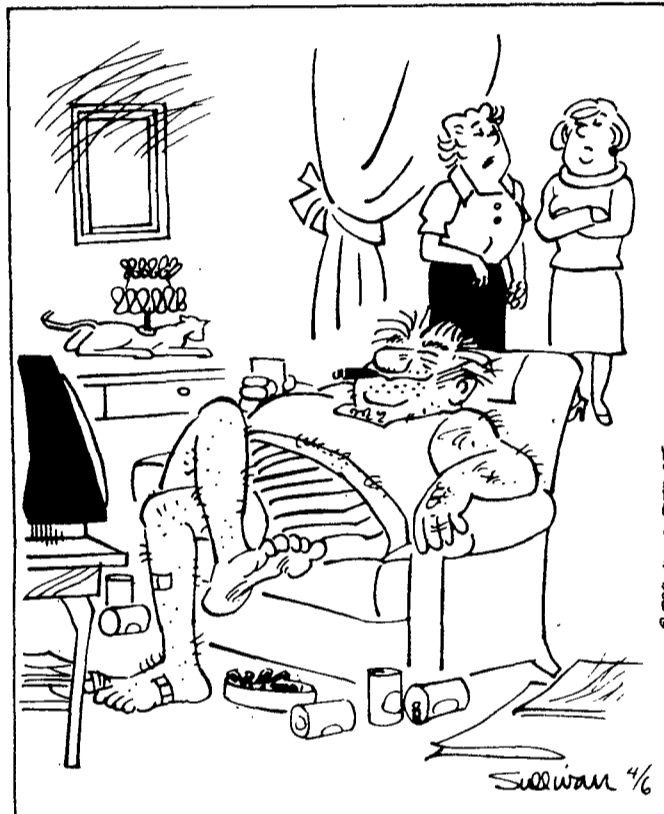
EDITOR:

Those who watch the U.S. Congress in action are familiar with the practice of attaching pork barrel bills (bills that don't have a chance of getting through Congress on their own) to popular bills that no one would dare vote against.

I sense the adoption of this practice by our Gov. Mario M. Cuomo in his letter to the C-J (5/9/84). He is attaching his controversial alcohol purchase "legislation" to the anti-drunk driving "crusade." He knows that no one in their right political mind will take on the anti-drunk driving "crusade," so his "legislation" should support the wine in supermarket "legislation" for the grape growers and the winery workers. He is proposing "legislation" to curtail the sale of alcoholic beverages in one piece of legislation while encouraging its increase in sales in another. In other words, talking out of both sides of his political mouth.

This is the same Gov. Cuomo who doesn't want to impose his personal beliefs on others in the abortion issue but who opposes the will of the majority of the people, the State Senate and the Assembly by vetoing capital punishment bills for personal reasons.

I have no interest, one way



"I THOUGHT SURE THIS WOULD BE THE LENT WHEN LONG-DORMANT SPIRITUAL VALUES WOULD COME TO THE FORE."

or the other, in either the alcohol purchase or the wine in supermarket legislation. Since your editorial listed his letter as a support for your position on the anti-drunk driving "crusade," I just thought you might not have been aware of his both sides of the fence activities and would appreciate having it called to your attention.

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Must Amend ERA Bill

EDITOR:

On May 21, the State Assembly passed the ERA, 118-30. If this amendment, unamended by an abortion neutralizing statement eventually is approved by two succeeding legislatures and a referendum, it will become a vehicle to permit abortion regardless of whether federal laws are changed in this respect. It would seem far-fetched that a simple law that says women's rights shall not be denied or abridged would be used to permit abortion but the rationale is that if only women seek abortions, to deny them access to abortion, funding of abortion or limiting of service for seeking abortion would be unconstitutional.

Pennsylvania has already struck down two state laws

restricting Medicaid funding for elective abortions on the grounds that the laws violated that state's ERA.

It is imperative that we write to our senators where the ERA will move for the next vote. If anyone does not know his senator, he may call the Board of Elections to find it out or he may call the diocesan Human Life Commission at 328-6400. Then he could write or call the senator at his home or office in Albany. Write to him at the Legislative Office Building, Albany, N.Y. 12247.

Be clear in telling him/her that he should 1. vote for an abortion neutralizing amendment to the ERA when it comes for a vote in the Senate and 2. he should vote against the ERA if it does not include an abortion neutralizing change. This should be done immediately.

Also, I suggest all should take another few minutes to write a note of thanks to Gary Proud for proposing an amendment to ERA (though it was not accepted by the Assembly) and to Roger Robach who did not vote for the unamended ERA. They need our support.

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