

Editorials

Reactionary

It is too early to tell what effect, if any, a new organization, National Pro-Life Democrats, will have on the abortion issue.

The group claims 2,000 dues-paying members and another 4,000 supporters. Its first sortie into the world of politics took place last week when it challenged the Democrat Party platform committee to stop backing legal abortion. It accompanied this with a plaintive declaration, "We are pro-life Democrats and we want our party back."

Time will tell if that will only be a poignant cry or if it will have some effect on the party which has consistently supported abortion -- either by its members who sincerely believe it is acceptable or by those who claim to abhor it but do not want to impose their will on others.

Perhaps the neatest ploy accomplished by those who support abortion on demand is making it seem a "liberal" position, thus subtly branding any politician who takes a pro-life position regressive or worse. It is difficult to understand what is either liberal or conservative, in the true sense of those words, about destroying unborn people.

It is somewhat easier to understand why certain politicians refuse to stand up and be counted. Many

don't believe that courage of conviction is a necessary ingredient of political success. And while the garnering of votes may be the principal motive, there may be more psychological or social reasons involved. Many simply do not want to take an anti-abortion position in the face of their friends and colleagues who accept it. Abortion, sadly is "in."

Thus, National Pro-Life Democrats has its work cut out for it. Not only must it influence party policy-makers it must also change the mentality which makes abortion seem as up-to-date and desirable as solar heating when indeed it has been one of the darker reactionary pursuits of mankind for centuries.

Bishops, Too

And speaking of the Democratic Party platform committee, it also has been hearing from the U.S. Catholic Conference, the public affairs wing for this nation's bishops. And again, the policy-makers are being told to reject liberalized abortion as a platform plank. It is not the only controversial issue addressed by the bishops but it continues to be the most divisive.

The bishops' abortion position will fall on deaf

ears. All three serious candidates for the presidential nomination accept abortion on demand, so it is highly unlikely that the platform will deviate from that position -- even if the party wanted to do, which it doesn't.

So on this vital issue, one which many consider the most crucial, the Democratic Party will merely hand over hundreds of thousands of votes to President Reagan in what may be the mistaken and stereotyped notion that pro-lifers are of such a stripe that they will be voting for him anyway.

Someone in the Democratic hierarchy had better wake up. A look at the U.S. Catholic Conference platform suggestions should give them a hint that many who take liberal positions on other issues will not accept abortion. For instance, this nation's bishops want nuclear disarmament; they want gun control; they oppose capital punishment; they want our foreign policy to force changes in South Africa; they want a comprehensive health insurance program, etc., etc.

These positions are consistently pro-life and provide excellent advice for a party which claims to represent the common man.

But regarding abortion, the Democratic Party will not change; it has worked itself into a corner from which it has no escape. That is hardly a liberal position in which to be.

and Opinion

Justice Calls For Recognition

EDITOR:

Marion J. Brown's letter (C-J 5/23/84), about women not being considered equals by an all-male hierarchy in the Roman Catholic Church, resonates with my own deepest convictions about this issue. Justice throughout the prophets and in the gospels and epistles, is a call for redemptive redistribution of resources, opportunity and power, and for the recognition of full personal responsibility and voluntary choice. Justice is equal concern for each person's (male and female) full experience of life. Righteousness is right relationships which live out justice; love is equal regard which prizes the other as self. If we are to speak for the dignity and equality of any one person or class, we must speak for all!

If one truly prays the Scriptures seeking the Spirit's guidance, one will see a progression/movement of the teaching which moves from (OT) women as possessions, to persons, to full equals (NT). And just as there are no longer ethnic hierarchies, nor slave and master hierarchies, so sexual hierarchies have come to an end. (Gal. 3:29) Most women who are aware in the Church today of the women's inequality issue, are aware through the grace of God the Holy Spirit (Who also happens to be available to both males and females), and like

the black Americans they call for an end to the spoken/unspeakable spiritual, emotional, mental and physical cruelty that the female gender has been victim of by well-meaning, sincere but perhaps short-sighted people. "Woe to you experts in religion! For you hide the truth from people; you won't accept it for yourselves, and you prevent others from having a chance to believe it" (Lk. 11:52). What has really changed in the 2000 years since Jesus died, rose and ascended -- in a culture and mentality that limited authority to males only?

Aware women and men in the Church today do not want tokenism, because it isn't truth and justice, and it doesn't bring peace. While there are, no doubt, some very well-intentioned women who claim to like the status quo, it is equally true that the oppressed seldom know they are oppressed, and are also usually unaware of how their oppression is contributing to the overall injustice and abuse existing in the world and in the Church. We all know that Jesus was not killed because of His healing presence, but because He challenged the system; an idol/false belief being any person, place, belief system or statute of law -- anything -- which we allow to take the place which only God should rightly occupy in ourselves and in our lives. Since Vatican II was supposed to be an updating, I can't help but wonder why the Church (people, both lay and clergy)

must continue to be abortive of the spiritual gifts and fruits, therefore the potential ministries also in and of it's female members who comprise at least 50 percent of it's total membership? The new Code of Canon Law may boast some progress, but it still contains "authority limited to males only," while claiming that virtually all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex are eliminated systematically from it. How can this code also claim that, in other regards, it makes no distinction between men and women in the application of its laws? Call it a matter of taste/prejudice if you will, but please not equality! And not religious/spiritual authority, for Jesus Himself brushed aside the "Jewish Guidelines" when the compassionate, tender mercy and justice of God called for Him to do so. In the 17th century, when Catherine of Siena told the Lord, "I am only a woman and ignorant. What can I do?" The Lord responded, "In My sight there is neither man nor woman, neither learned nor unlearned. But I know that in these last days the pride of those who call themselves learned and wise has risen to such heights that I have resolved to humble them. I will therefore send unlearned men, yes, and women, who will put to shame the learning the men think they have." Jesus is Lord! It hurts deeply not to be accepted as a candidate for ordination, whether to the permanent diaconate or the priesthood, just because one does not have the mentality and body of a male. I praise and thank God that the Kingdom of Heaven has no such criteria, where God Who is Spirit (therefore has no sexuality) reigns forever and ever!

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Untapped Mysteries

EDITOR:

Your story June 6 about the Columbus, Ohio, girl who was plagued by spiritual or possibly evil forces, identified as psychokinesis, is one of many which have taken place and which have also been called "hoaxes." The Catholic newspaper editor who wrote in a column about

the mysterious event of items flying through the air unaided said, "We were baffled and are reminded of how little we really do know."

It reminded me of the words of a well-known scientist -- Charles Steinmetz -- who did much in the field of electrophysics for General Electric in its early days when he was sometimes known as GE's "hunchback wizard." His words concerned discoveries yet to be made but from a brilliant scientist, were of an unexpected nature. He said:

"I think the greatest discovery to be made will be along spiritual lines. Here is the force which history clearly teaches has been the greatest power in the development of man. Yet we have been merely playing with it and have never seriously studied it as we have social forces. Some day people will learn that material things do not bring happiness, that they are of little use in making men and women creative and forceful.

"Then the scientists of the world will turn their laboratories over to the study of God and prayer and the spiritual forces which have been hardly scratched. When this day comes, the world will advance more in one generation than it has in the past four."

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Editor's Note: Reader Earley also noted that Steinmetz's "socialist sympathies" led him to offer services to Russian Communists thus "it seems strange that he mentioned God and prayer instead of the kinds of technologies which have developed in this century."

Priest Role Sacramental

EDITOR:

Re the new study on priestly vocations (Courier-Journal, May 30), I believe one of the principal reasons for lack of vocations is an abysmal ignorance of the essential role of a priest. A priest's main function is the Mass and the sacraments and preaching the Word. Everything else can and is being done by laymen and laywomen.

The priest is another Christ, the mediator between



God and man. For himself and for God's people he offers Christ to God, the Father, and constantly renews in an unbloody manner Christ's own sacrifice on Calvary, the redemptive act that brought salvation to all Christians. What a marvelous vocation!

This is his distinctive role. Even in the liturgy, everything else -- reading, serving at the altar, distributing Holy Communion -- is being done by others.

Now, uninformed young men and women observing the scene would be hard put to make a permanent commitment to a life of celibacy for such a calling. Why? Because they do not understand the real distinction between the priest and the rest of God's people. Often priests in their desire to be one of us play down their own roles.

If priests would exult in their vocation, and preach the theology of the priesthood as St. Paul does in his great letter to the Hebrews, if they would show by their attitude that they are aware of the uniqueness of their calling, then no commitment would be too much. Vocations will not be increased by lessening the obligations but by deepening

the knowledge of what it means to become a priest.
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Do Fathers Get Respect?

EDITOR:

On June 17, we celebrated Fathers Day. However, there are many men who will never know what being a real loving, caring and responsible father means. The Supreme Court decision of 1973 gave women the right to abort (terminate) the lives of their unborn babies. This women's right to privacy is more important than the father's right to insist his son or daughter be given the right to life.

Many men are unaware their wives have conceived and killed their unborn children. Abortion ends the life of a separate baby's body which was made from the male's sperm and the woman's egg combined. The important role of fatherhood must be respected and considered above the woman's right to end the life of his son or daughter.

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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.