

## Bishops, teens take 'gloves off' at forum

By Roy J. Horner  
Catholic News Service

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Sixteen youths chosen at random took turns firing questions at four bishops during a "gloves-off" forum at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Louisville last week.

During the Nov. 18 session, teens grilled the bishops on such topics as female priests and altar servers, artificial birth control, abortion, married priests, devotion to the Blessed Mother and whether God is male or female.

"I find when you talk to youth, in one sense, the gloves are off," said Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Paul-Minneapolis, who also is episcopal moderator of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministries, which sponsored the conference.

The Louisville conference brought together youths and youth ministers from the eastern United States. Nine teenagers and three youth leaders from the Diocese of Rochester attended the conference.

"I thought it was really good," said Kathy O' Sullivan, a member of the youth group at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Brighton. "There was a lot of excitement there," she said. "There were a lot of workshops ... I wish it was longer."

Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly of Louisville, and Bishops John J. McRaith of Owensboro, Ky., and Daniel M. Buechlein of Memphis, Tenn., also participated in the

"gloves-off" forum, which was similar to one held last June in Denver.

Anne O'Neil, 18, of the Diocese of Norwich, Conn., one of some 4,200 youths at the Nov. 16-19 conference, said the bishops' appearance was "a visible sign that the hierarchy of the church is really saying, 'We care about what you think.' That's something the youth really need."

About the church's prohibition against women priests, Bishop Buechlein said the issue was part of a complicated theological and sacramental question and "the answer is that (ordaining women) is just not tradition."

The issue of female altar servers is part of the same "very complicated" question, he said. If women can be eucharistic ministers and lectors, "why can't they serve at the altar?" Bishop Buechlein asked, noting that that the matter was being studied by the Vatican's Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship.

Parishes with altar girls decided to use them because the matter is being studied, he said. "If the ruling comes down that they can't (use them), then they'll face the question," he said, "but they don't want to before that ruling comes down."

Responding to a question on artificial birth control, Bishop Carlson said church approval would "deteriorate from that real deep meaning of sexuality and love," which carries with it a great responsibility.

"Those people who push condoms or ar-

tificial birth control say young people today cannot control themselves, they can't be responsible, so therefore tell them to use condoms so they don't get pregnant and they don't get AIDS," Bishop Carlson said.

But the church, he pointed out, "says we believe the young men and women can be responsible with the gifts God gives them, and they can use their sexuality in the way that God intended it to be used ... within the sacrament of marriage."

In his remarks Bishop McRaith said he did not think priests would be permitted to marry at any time in "the near future."

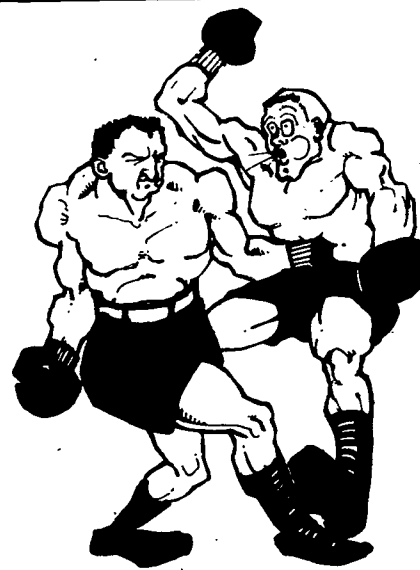
Archbishop Kelly said he would have "a problem" allowing priests to marry. Such a situation would place great stress on a priest's wife, he said, since priests "generally work 16 hours a day."

Bishop McRaith also defended devotion to Mary in light of criticism from other denominations.

"I don't think we should apologize for that or in any sense feel badly that others might attack her," he said.

Responding to a question about the gender of God, Archbishop Kelly said God encompasses all the qualities of both, and that gender "is a good approach but I don't think it's the only one."

It is appropriate, he said, to think of the feminine qualities in women "as coming to us from God ... but it's also true that the other qualities are there of men."



The teenagers applauded the bishops' answers to questions about abortion and the "pro-choice" side of the issue.

"I would say that if you were just talking about choice, that is a question of rhetoric," Bishop Carlson said. "What a Catholic is for is the dignity of all human life, and that means life from the moment of conception until someone is ready to be called home by God, young and old together. ... Choice can only be for life."

Bishop Buechlein said that the church is for the "rights of everyone," and that the rights of an unborn child cannot be swept aside. "We need you to help get this message across that we're for all human rights ...," he added.

Archbishop Kelly asked the teens what more they want bishops to do.

Maureen Matthews of the Washington Archdiocese replied that bishops giving time to youths was important.

"We don't want to hear, 'Oh tradition, oh theology, oh this, oh that,'" she said. "We need answers, and we need them straight. The second point is to interact with us. ... Sometimes (pastoral) letters don't cut it."

One questioner asked how liturgies could become as dynamic as those conducted by Father George Stallings, a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington who set up a breakaway congregation for black Catholics.

Archbishop Kelly said he knew Father Stallings from the archbishop's days in Washington. "I love him," Archbishop Kelly said, adding, however, that "the answer to our problems is not to break away. The answer ... is to work inside the church."

### Aquinas Institute

## Does rock music influence you in a positive or negative way?

DAVE LADUE, junior

A lot of the times, (rock) can motivate you to do things. All of the messages in songs can be positive on your outlook on life. U2 is my favorite band. I think all of their songs have an important message.



PATRICK B. LANCER, senior

Rock music has a positive force on my life. I like the new music, but the best is from the 50s, 60s and early 70s. I don't believe in all the hype about today's music.



CHRISTINE MILLER, sophomore

I feel that rock music can go either way. There are some lyrics that can help people through troubles they are having or problems, and there are some lyrics that can make people do something that they don't want to do or do something to be a part of a group.



## AS TEENS SEE

**School Break Special** February 17-24, 1990  
Reservations closing soon  
Sail on the Ms. Nieuw Amsterdam. Ports include Key West, Cozumel, Ocho Rios, and Grand Cayman.  
Air from Rochester included. No tipping policy on Holland America. Special Group Rates Available.  
For Information Call:  
**BERNARD TRAVEL** CLOVER COMMONS  
2900 MONROE AVE. ROCHESTER, NY 14618  
**381-3600**  
Holland America Line  
A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

**HOUSE OF GUITARS**  
Most New Album and Tape Releases Just \$5.98 & \$6.98  
CD's From \$3.98 to \$11.98 Each

We received 17 correct entries identifying Janis Joplin as having recorded the #1 hit song, "Me and Bobby McGee." The winner was Eric Schmitt of Rochester.

**MUSIC TRIVIA**

**This week's question:**  
Who is George O'Dowd better known as?

**A:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules:**  
Each week, the Catholic Courier, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon and send it in to the Catholic Courier. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.  
If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.  
All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

**The Catholic Courier**  
Music Trivia  
1150 Buffalo Rd.  
Rochester, NY 14624

**YOU CAN UNLOCK THE DOORS!**

A person caring for an elderly loved one often feels locked-up in their own home with no one to relieve them of their responsibilities for even a few hours. Now, you can help by volunteering just a few hours of your time each week. You'll become a companion to a senior citizen, sharing your hobbies and interests, while providing a well-deserved break for the caregiver.

For more information, please call the Regional Council on Aging's Home Help for Seniors Respite Service at 586-8921 or 225-3208.

**United Way** **Regional Council on Aging**

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**AD COUNCIL ROCHESTER** Space donated to the Ad Council as a public service of Catholic Courier