

Academic attacks use of artificial contraception

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Hoping casual sex will someday become as unacceptable to people as racism or smoking is now, Dr. Janet E. Smith is devoting much of her life to publicly speaking against the use of artificial contraception.

Associate professor of philosophy at the University of Dallas, a diocesan college, Smith is convinced that the Catholic Church is perfectly right to condemn artificial contraception — even when used by married couples — because of the host of evils its use brings.

In a phone interview from her Irving, Texas office on Saturday, Jan. 7, Smith listed abortion, divorce, unwanted pregnancies, emotional distress, and women's physical health problems as among artificial contraception's direct and indirect consequences.

The interview came on the heels of her speech last Wednesday, Jan. 4., at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Irondequoit, where Smith had talked on last September's U.N. population control and development conference in Cairo, Egypt.

Smith also debated Father Charles E. Curran, a Rochester diocesan priest and noted dissenter on the church's ban on artificial contraception, last October in Addison, a Dallas suburb. Father Cur-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Dr. Janet E. Smith, associate professor of philosophy at the University of Dallas, visited Irondequoit's St. Thomas the Apostle Church Jan. 4 to speak on last fall's U.N. population conference in Cairo, Egypt.

ran currently teaches at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and maintains that, within marriage, contraception may be licit.

Ironically, Father Curran and Dr. Smith have both suffered for their positions in the academic world. Father Curran has been told by the Vatican that he can no longer teach as a Catholic theologian because of his views on contraception.

Meanwhile, Dr. Smith maintains that she was denied tenure at Notre Dame University because of her pro-life activism and adherence to Catholic orthodoxy. She eventually filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and received a settlement from the school.

"He's too liberal for the conservatives,

and I'm too conservative for the liberals," she said with a laugh.

But she and Father Curran definitely do not agree on the value of contraception. Women take the brunt of the damage inflicted by the casual sexual atmosphere artificial contraception creates, Smith said, noting that between one quarter to one-third of all U.S. pregnancies end in abortion now. Yet, wherever it has been introduced, artificial contraception was allegedly supposed to prevent that scenario, Smith said.

Rather than ushering in an enlightened era of human sexuality, Smith argued that artificial contraception simply allowed men and women to consider sex outside of committed marriages, with the possibility for negative outcomes to such casual relationships in-

creasing astronomically whenever contraception failed.

"We waged the sexual revolution," she said of her 1960s generation. "We won in one sense. We won the hearts and souls of America. But we lost in our personal lives."

Artificial contraception allowed people to make sex a thoughtless act, something that it simply is not, Smith stressed. In sex, she emphasized, each person is saying to the other: "With you, I am willing to engage in an act that can bring forth another being."

"We shouldn't ever do that casually," she commented.

Now, despite its apparent failure to stem the tide of abortion and unwanted pregnancies in the United States, artificial contraception is the gospel this nation is preaching to the rest of the world, Smith explained. She remarked that the September U.N. conference on population control and development highlighted the radically different views of humanity held by the modern world, led by the United States, and by the Catholic church.

The Vatican and its allies, particularly in the Muslim world, squared off at the conference against the United States and its allies over the use of abortion and birth control as family planning methods. Both sides won and lost in the end as the conference's final document received a mixed consensus from many delegates.

At the conference, the United States and its allies promoted abortion and artificial contraception under the banner of reproductive rights because these nations hold freedom as the highest human value, Smith said.

The church, on the other hand, holds love as the highest human value, and for true love to come forth means that some aspects of humanity's freedom must be restrained, Smith continued, citing the sexual drive as one such aspect.

Education series on tap at church in Apalachin

APALACHIN — The Stephen Ministry at St. Margaret Mary's Church, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., is hosting a Continuing Education Series through June. The series began Jan. 3.

Upcoming programs are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Dates and topics are as follows:

Feb. 1 — "Addiction: Hope and Healing through a Spiritual Journey," March 1 — "Teen, Young Adult, Church and Society Issues," April 5 — "Adult Survivors of Abuse," May 3 — "Living With AIDS," June 7 — "Post-Divorce Adjustment."

This series is a continuation of a fall program that took place at Apalachin United Methodist Church. Sessions are free and open to the public. For more details, call 607/625-3191.

Tier hospice offering area support groups

ELMIRA — Southern Tier Hospice, 244 W. Water St., is currently offering support groups for grieving members of the community.

This agency is open to families and friends of hospice patients, as well as any others who think they might benefit from being in the company of others who have lost a loved one.

For details, call Karlene Bradley at 607/734-1570.

Obituaries

Sr. Xavier Donegan, ex-St. Agnes High principal

PITTSFORD — Sister Xavier Donegan, SSJ, the first-ever principal of the former St. Agnes High School in Rochester, died on Sunday, Dec. 25, 1994, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convict infirmary. She was 83 years old.

Sister Xavier entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1931 from her home parish of St. Rose Church in Lima. She was a graduate of Lima High School, Nazareth College and the University of Rochester.

Sister Xavier served as principal when St. Agnes High School opened on East Main Street in 1939. In addition to St. Agnes, Sister Xavier's teaching career included stints at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral School and Nazareth Academy, as well as DeSales High School in Geneva. She also served as librarian and archivist at the Nazareth College library for 24 years.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister

Xavier was held on Dec. 28 at the SSJ Motherhouse Chapel. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, with Monsignor William Shannon assisting and Fathers John Hayes, Joseph Donovan, James Doyle, John Cavanaugh, CSB, Michael Callahan and Donald Curtiss also attending.

Sister Xavier is survived by several nieces and nephews as well as her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Sr. Cleophine Power, 89; taught at Holy Family School

Sister Mary Cleophine Power, SSND, who taught at Rochester's Holy Family School from 1957-62, died on Thursday, Dec. 15, 1994, at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Motherhouse in Wilton, Conn. She was 89 years old.

Born July 20, 1905, in Nova Scotia, Canada, Sister Cleophine professed her

final vows as a School Sister on Aug. 15, 1935. Between 1935 and 1970, she taught several schools in Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, Vermont and Connecticut. In 1970, she became a medical secretary at the mother house, retiring from active ministry in 1986.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister

Cleophine was celebrated Dec. 17, 1994, at the motherhouse. Interment was in St. Mary's Cemetery in Bethel, Conn.

Donations in memory of Sister Cleophine may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame Development Fund, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897.

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