

United States Catholic Conference
Family Life Division
Respect Life! ADV4155

Respect Life!

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Respect Life Program 1975
A Catholic Community Experience



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Respect Life!

Respect Life Committee
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
1975

No nation today is faultless where human rights are concerned. It is not the role of the synod to identify specific violations; this can better be done at the local level. At the same time we desire by our words and actions to encourage those who work for human rights, to call upon those in authority to promote human rights, and to give hope to those who suffer violations to their rights. We call attention here to certain rights most threatened today.

“The right to life”: This right is basic and inalienable. It is grievously violated in our day by abortion and euthanasia, by widespread torture, by acts of violence against innocent parties, and by the scourge of war. The arms race is an insanity which burdens the world and creates the conditions for even more massive destruction of life.

“The right to eat”: This right is directly linked to the right to life. Millions today face starvation. The nations and peoples of the world must make a concerted act of solidarity in the forthcoming United Nations Food Conference. We call upon governments to undergo a conversion in their attitude toward the victims of hunger, to respond to the imperatives of justice and reconciliation, and speedily to find the means of feeding those who are without food.

“Socio-economic rights”: Reconciliation is rooted in justice. Massive disparities of power and wealth in the world, and often within nations, are a grave obstacle to reconciliation. Concentration of economic power in the hands of a few nations and multinational groups, structural imbalances in trade relations and commodity prices, failure to balance economic growth with adequate distribution, both nationally and internationally, widespread unemployment and discriminatory employment practices, as well as patterns of global consumption of resources, all require reform if reconciliation is to be possible.

“Politico-cultural rights”: Reconciliation in society and the rights of the person require that individuals have an effective role in shaping their own destinies. They have a right to participate in the political process freely and responsibly. They have a right to free access of information, freedom of speech and press, as well as freedom of dissent.

They have a right to be educated and to determine the education of their children. Individuals and groups must be secure from arrest, torture and imprisonment for political or ideological reasons, and all in society, including migrant workers, must be guaranteed juridical protection of their personal, social, cultural and political rights. We condemn the denial or abridgement of rights because of race. We advocate that nations and contesting groups seek reconciliation by halting persecution of others and by granting amnesty, marked by mercy and equity, to political prisoners and exiles.

“The right of religious liberty”: This right uniquely reflects the dignity of the person as this is known from the word of God and from reason itself. Today it is denied or restricted by diverse political systems in ways which impede worship, religious education and social ministry. We call upon all governments to acknowledge the right of religious liberty in words and foster it in deeds, to eliminate any type of discrimination, and to accord to all, regardless of their religious convictions, the full rights and opportunities of citizens.

Synod of Bishops, 1974

Introduction

The responsibility of every member of God's human family to promote and foster a genuine respect for human life is an ongoing challenge of first priority in today's world. Though situations abound in which the sanctity of human life is denied or ignored, nations and peoples are coming to a new understanding of human rights within the context of the interdependent nature of international relationships.

The annual Respect Life Program is meant to focus our attention on the enduring need for justice and for structures that will protect the dignity of man and insure human rights. It is not simply to decry the existence of injustice in the world, but to emphasize the theological foundation of mankind's thirst for justice. The Program calls on the resources of parishes, schools, social service and health care agencies. The main theme of the 1975 Program is family life. This approach was taken for two reasons.

First, respect for life involves respect for the person and for human dignity. The life of the individual person begins in a family, and personal growth and development usually takes place within the family unit. In fact, the primary learning experience of respect for the rights of others occurs in the earliest years of family life. Moreover, material and spiritual needs are met, and opportunities for self-development are provided in the context of family relationships. We can say that education for justice and social harmony is learned first of all in the family.

The second reason for this focus in the Respect Life Program this year is that the welfare of society is very much dependent on the stability and well-being of the family. A fair and equitable distribution of material goods, a legal structure that respects family rights, the availability of housing, employment opportunities, education and health care are basic to insuring family stability. But society must also clearly proclaim the value of marriage and family life, and assist married couples in achieving stability and success in their marriage relationship.

It is important that the family be able to draw on its own inherent strengths and resources. But society can play a supportive role here by providing preparation for marriage and parenthood within the educational system, and by establishing a network of counseling facilities and special remedial programs for families that need them. We are often told that a major effort to assist families is unnecessary or too costly. But the statistics on family disorganization prove the necessity, and the cost of an integral and consistent program of family support is a small price to insure social harmony and peace.

This year's Handbook provides essays on the unborn, the family, the social conditions affecting family life, the aging, and death and dying. The program format on children emphasizes that the child is a unique person with special claims on the entire human family. For the child is not simply another "dependent," but is the representative of the future in the present milieu. Since 1975 has been designated by the United Nations as International Women's Year, there is a special format to highlight the contributions of women and the obstacles to their full enjoyment of basic human rights.

The 1975 Respect Life Program begins on October 5, 1975. The schedule is open-ended with the options of pursuing the various topics throughout the fall months, or utilizing the program during the weeks of Lent, 1976. Schools and religious education programs will likely adopt a schedule suited to their own needs.

As in previous years, each format begins with an overview of the theme, to generate awareness and stimulate further investigation and deeper understanding. A special effort has been made to provide up-to-date audiovisual resources in addition to books and pamphlets. Recommended programs are outlined, with reference to agencies that will provide further program assistance.

As we have found in the past, the success of the Respect Life Program is mainly attributable to the diocesan effort which increasingly involves laity, religious, priests and bishops in a highly visible effort to proclaim the sanctity of life and the dignity of the person. As we approach our nation's 200th birthday, we also hope that Americans will rediscover the self-evident truths "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In so doing, we will demonstrate again the validity of the American dream, and we will stand before the world as a people who respect the Creator and are dedicated to the human dignity of each person He has called into existence.

Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities
Terence Cardinal Cooke, Chairman

Most Rev. George W. Ahr
Most Rev. Juan A. Arzube
Most Rev. Walter W. Curtis
Most Rev. Thomas A. Donnellan

Most Rev. Justin A. Driscoll
Most Rev. Francis Dunn
Most Rev. Raymond J. Gallagher
Most Rev. Timothy Harrington

Most Rev. Andrew McDonald
Most Rev. Harold R. Perry
Most Rev. Cornelius M. Power
Most Rev. Charles A. Salatka

The Unborn

All should be persuaded that human life and the task of transmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence they cannot be measured or perceived only in terms of it, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men. . . . For God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life in a manner which is worthy of man. Therefore from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes.

Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

The debate about abortion has persisted in the U.S. for almost a decade. Despite the attempt of the U.S. Supreme Court to terminate the discussion, abortion is and will remain a highly charged and much debated topic. Why so? There are many reasons: abortion is basically a moral question; it is related to other life-death questions; the legal treatment of abortion has serious implications for society's respect for human life.

But perhaps the fundamental reason why the abortion debate persists, with great determination and zeal on both sides, is that it exposes some deeply human and personal dilemmas. When does the life of an individual human being begin? What should we do — individually and as a nation — to sustain and protect that life? What happens to the unborn child — the parents — the medical profession — each time an abortion takes place?

The Current Debate

The developing unborn child has increasingly been an object of study by a variety of empirical sciences, such as genetics, biology and fetology. The factual evidence which they have accumulated shows that each individual human life begins at fertilization, that is, when the egg and sperm unite to form a new, genetically distinct, human life.

Society now debates the question of whether this new human life is to be valued in any way. On January 22, 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that unborn

human life represents a moral value of zero. However, the evidence of ordinary human experience says otherwise. Put simply, a woman knows when she is pregnant, and she knows what she must do to nurture her child during the first nine months of its life within her. The adventure of a new human life has already begun, and rejection of the unborn infant because he is in one of the most dependent stages of human development makes no more sense than rejecting a newborn infant because he or she cannot talk, walk, or engage in abstract thinking.

For human life, which is a gift of God, is the basis of all human development, before as well as after birth. The presence of human life is the basis of the dignity of the human person and all human rights.

Human life is both a gift and a responsibility. It is a precious gift that we share with all members of the human family, the basis of innumerable relationships of love, friendship, community. It is also the bond that unites us, that sets up demands of justice, equality, social harmony. Most importantly, the expectations of pregnancy and the actual birth of the baby are for parents a sign of their love and a promise of the future, a future that they have given to someone who shares their love.

Some who demean human life do so because it can then more easily be destroyed. Current efforts to expand abortion are not premised on an inherent conflict between mother and child. On the contrary, abortion is now pursued for social purposes or for

reasons of convenience. For instance, those in favor of population control have designated the child as the enemy, and abortion is the easiest weapon to wield. As one population expert has expressed it, “the modern growth of population will be slowed permanently only to the extent that in the judgment of each individual . . . children are worth less than they will cost in time, in effort, in money, in emotion — or in the threat that is posed by their very existence.”

Senators Charles Percy and Jacob Javits, in a recent debate about government payment for abortion on request, agreed that we should “consider the cost of abortions as against the probability that a large number of these children would be supported for many, many years by taxpayers’ money if the abortions were not permitted.” The Senators are wrong because no such probability can be demonstrated, but they are expressing the crass materialism of our age which sees human life as expendable “if the price is right.”

When Life Begins: A Factual Question

In response to the question, “When should the value of personhood be attached to human life,” some claim that relationship with others is the deciding norm, some claim it is the presence of the soul, others cite viability, and others birth. However, such claims obscure or overlook the full range of the factual scientific evidence pertinent to a determination of whether human life is present. The sciences of fetology and genetics yield the clearest evidence for such a determination.

Fetology traces the development of both the faculties and the organs that the unborn shares with all other human beings. As Dr. A. W. Liley has eloquently stated:

Biologically, at no stage can we subscribe to the view that the fetus is a mere appendage of the mother. Genetically, mother and baby are separate individuals from conception. Physiologically, we must accept that the conceptus is, in very large measure, in charge of the pregnancy, in command of his own environment and destiny with a tenacious purpose. One hour after the sperm has penetrated the ovum, the nuclei of the two cells have fused and the genetic instructions from one parent have met the complementary instructions from the other parent to establish the whole design, the inheritance of a new person. . . . [The uterus] is his home for the next 270 days and to make it habitable the embryo develops a placenta and a protective capsule of fluid for himself. By 25 days the developing heart starts beating, the first strokes of a pump that will make 3,000 million beats in a lifetime. By 30 days and just 2 weeks past mother’s first missed period, the baby, ¼ inch long, has a brain of unmistakable human proportions, eyes, ears, mouth, kidneys, liver and umbilical cord and a heart pumping blood he has made himself. By 45 days, about the time of mother’s second missed period, the baby’s skeleton is complete, in cartilage not bone, the buds of the milk teeth

appear and he makes the first movements of his limbs and body — although it will be another 12 weeks before mother notices movements. By 63 days he will grasp an object placed in his palm and can make a fist.

This then is the fetus we know and indeed once were. This is the fetus we look after in modern obstetrics, the same baby we are caring for before and after birth, who before birth can be ill and need diagnosis and treatment just like any other patient. This is also the fetus whose existence and identity must be so callously ignored or energetically denied by advocates of abortion.

Another approach is that of genetics. Dr. Jerome Lejeune, in what he terms a commonplace observation, states flatly that “all human beings now living on this planet share the same karotype,” that is, the same genetic heritage. In this sense, as Dr. Lejeune also notes, “during the transmission of life, the link between parents and infant is continuous.” In other words, from the fusion of the sperm and egg, the special genetic information that is coded into RNA, DNA, ribosomes and proteins, very much determines the human development of the new — and genetically independent — individual that we call the zygote or the fetus. Thus, once fertilization takes place, if there is no interference and if the unborn infant receives sufficient nutrient supply, the process of human development will culminate in the birth of a human baby.

The personhood of the unborn rests on objective data. The facts give witness to the unmistakable presence of human life. As the U.S. bishops stated in their testimony before Congress on the need for a constitutional amendment to protect human life:

Newly conceived human life should be revered as a gift from God and from nature. The dignity of the unborn child is neither conferred nor taken away by any man or woman or by any government or society. That dignity is rooted in an objective individuality that inherently tends toward the openness and transcendence men commonly call personhood.

The Dimension of Human Experience

Wonderful as the process of human reproduction is, we must remember that the infant, before as well as after birth, is not just an abstract entity called “human life.” Each child is also — and more importantly — a unique person whose life and future are bound up with the lives and futures of many other persons. For his or her parents, the unborn child is an expression of their relationship. For some couples, the relationship may be one of infatuation or of manipulation. In most cases, the relationship is that of love between two persons who are pursuing a deeper unity and who see their children as an affirmation of their unity, fidelity and love. If abortion is thought of as the destruction of the genetic blueprint, it may become an abstract and impersonal decision. But for every man and woman who have joined in bringing a child into being,

abortion is the killing of their own offspring, and something of themselves dies with the unborn infant.

Perhaps one reason why almost one million known legal abortions took place during 1974 is that the abortion decision has been lifted out of the context of woman-man relationships and parent-children relationships, and treated simply as a medical procedure, a private act of a woman, a practical solution to a difficult situation.

Thus in trying to understand why abortions take place, we must first look at the type of relationships between women and men that permit or prohibit such killing.

When a man and a woman are in love, they pursue a relationship of mutual trust, fidelity, honesty and care for one another. Their interests, concerns, hopes and lives become intertwined. More and more, they see the future as a shared adventure, conditioned upon their personal relationship. For the vast majority, this constantly developing relationship leads to marriage. It also prompts people to share their love with parents and friends, with other members of society, but most especially with the children they bring into the world. This does not give a mystical quality to childbearing. Being a parent always means increased responsibility, increased risk, a greater sharing of oneself, and a call for greater maturity on the part of both parents. But meeting these demands also intensifies a couple's love for one another and strengthens the relationship between them.

Thus, a new pregnancy does not become a dangerous threat to their love and unity, nor too great a burden for their relationship to bear. Pregnancy means another opportunity to grow, to enrich the quality of mutual love, another challenge to the family to accept and care for a new member. For most couples the reasons why they set out to have a baby include the confidence that they will be good parents, awareness that their reach into the future is shared with their children, and recognition that children are good people, good companions, and given love and acceptance, good fun.

Children are also witnesses to the love between a man and a woman, the generosity and courage they have discovered and developed in their relationship, the sense of mutual security they have in one another. Indeed even when conception is not a carefully planned event, in a healthy marriage, it is a sign of the presence of these qualities.

All this emphasizes an obvious question. If childbearing and parenting can be so good and rewarding, why are there one million abortions a year? There are a variety of answers. The sexual revolution and a reluctance to assume responsibility for one's actions, an erroneous definition of female privacy endorsed by the Supreme Court, the tendency to find easy and quick solutions to all human problems — these things provide a backdrop for permissive abortion.

But in many instances, abortion brings a woman face-to-face with the fact that a relationship that she

hoped would develop and a person in whom she placed her trust and love are totally unable to meet her expectations. Abortion is the sign of rejection, of isolation, of non-love. Abortion is an act of escape from mutual love and from intimacy for both man and woman; it is a denial of generosity and a betrayal of empty promises. The woman is isolated, and left to work out her problem. The man who encourages or simply goes along with the abortion is dodging his responsibility to a friend, the mother of his child. The big-time spenders may salve their consciences by paying the medical bills, but no financial arrangement makes up for shattered hopes or the destruction of one's child. For every man who is a party to an abortion, it is graphic testimony to his selfishness and unwillingness to love his child and the mother of his child.

Every abortion is the denial or destruction of a human relationship between a man and woman. Not only is the child dead, but something of their relationship has also died. If there is a marriage and other children, the abortion is a threat — psychologically and physically — to the other children. Psychologists tell us that children are disturbed by the knowledge of abortion because it prompts the question of what might have been — or yet might be — if they had been or yet become too much of a strain on their parents' convenience. And although statistics are not completely conclusive, it is a thought provoking fact that 28% of the abortions in 1974 were performed on married women — a figure which correlates with the number of divorces that can be expected among couples marrying in a given year.

Abortion and the Medical Profession

In its 1973 abortion opinions, the Supreme Court asserted that the abortion decision is "inherently and primarily a medical decision, and basic responsibility for it must rest with the physician." Time and again throughout the two opinions Justice Blackmun showed unlimited confidence in the medical profession and assigned extraordinary responsibilities to physicians.

Abortion may be a medical procedure, but it is not simply a medical decision, nor is it one that involves only the woman and her physician. The abortion decision involves an expectant mother and the child, as well as the father of the child. In many cases the decision touches parents, family or close friends of the expectant mother. The decision-making process involves moral judgments, psychological or emotional factors, and reaches into other areas such as the relationship between father and mother and the implications for future childbearing.

Nonetheless, responsibility for abortion does rest heavily on the medical profession and especially on those physicians who perform abortions. Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a physician who directed the Center for Reproductive and Sexual Health, the largest abortion clinic in the United States, has clearly outlined the ethical dilemmas that he faced and the responsibility

that he ultimately found unbearable. In a carefully written article in a respected medical journal, Dr. Nathanson denied that abortion is simply a medical decision. In fact, said Dr. Nathanson, "there are seldom any purely medical indications for abortion. The decision is the most serious responsibility a woman can experience in her lifetime, and at present it is hers alone."

After a year and a half, Dr. Nathanson resigned as director of the Center. Although the Center had performed 60,000 abortions with no maternal deaths, he said that he was compelled to resign because "I am deeply troubled by my own increasing certainty that I had in fact presided over 60,000 deaths."

Dr. Nathanson explained that there was no longer any serious doubt in his mind that human life exists in the womb from the very onset of pregnancy. In fact, he wrote, "since the vast majority of pregnancies are carried successfully to term, abortion must be seen as the interruption of a process that would otherwise have produced a citizen of the world. Denial of this reality is the crassest kind of moral evasiveness." He argued that it is necessary to face the fact that in abortion "we are taking life, and the deliberate taking of life, even of a special order and under special circumstances, is an inexpressibly serious matter."

"Somehow," Dr. Nathanson added, "we must not deny the pervasive sense of loss that should accompany abortion and its most unfortunate interruption of life. We must not coarsen our sensitivities through common practice and brute denial."

Dr. Nathanson is not alone in his realization that "life is an interdependent phenomenon for us all." Willingness to destroy life in certain circumstances compromises the medical profession's overall commitment to heal, to cure, to protect and foster the capacity of human beings for living.

The implications of permissive abortion for the medical profession also came to light in the Boston trial of Dr. Kenneth Edelin. Dr. Edelin was tried and convicted of manslaughter for having caused or allowed the death of a fetus that, in the mind of the jury, might have survived with the doctor's help. Dr. Edelin pleaded innocent on the grounds that the fetus was not a person, and that in performing the abortion he felt no responsibility to preserve the life of the fetus. In defense of the physician, it was argued that in permitting abortion on request during the first six months of pregnancy, the Supreme Court had accepted that an abortion would destroy whatever "potentiality for human life" a fetus might have. However, human life is present from conception, and the process of human development continues throughout the pregnancy. Practically, there is little difference between an eight-month-old fetus and a one-month-old infant. Both require care and sustenance to reach their potential as self-sustaining and independent persons.

The Boston case raises serious questions for society and for the medical profession. First, on what grounds and by what authority may a doctor terminate the life

of a living human fetus? Second, in an atmosphere of permissive abortion, what is the doctor's responsibility to sustain the life of a living fetus? Third, if the potential for human life is somewhat limited, as in the case of the elderly, the seriously ill or victims of accident or violence, is a doctor justified in refusing medical care or in taking direct measures to terminate life?

American society is aware of these problems, but it seems unwilling to address them openly. For various reasons, there is a tendency to defend the Supreme Court's opinions and to label all disagreement as the fanatic opposition of Catholics and right-to-life forces.

However, other nations are struggling with the same moral problems raised by the abortion question. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled against permissive abortion. The West German Supreme Court rejected permissive abortion on the grounds that the "bitter experience of the Nazi period provided historical grounds for determining that the protection of human life should receive absolute priority." The German court emphasized that in the German Constitution the express recognition of the self-evident right-to-life was chiefly a reaction to theories of "valueless life," "the final solution," and the liquidation programs of the Nazi regime.

The abortion debate continues in the public forum. In the late fall of 1974, nearly two years after the Supreme Court's abortion rulings, the highly respected firm of DeVries & Associates conducted an extensive public opinion poll which found that more than seven out of every ten Americans think Congress should take legislative action to reverse the Court's abortion rulings. This finding is consistent with the other major opinion polls on abortion conducted over the last decade. It is not surprising, then, that constitutional amendments have been introduced in Congress and that hearings have been in progress in the Senate for over a year. On the state level, the question of appropriate abortion legislation remains unresolved. In an alarming development, euthanasia legislation was introduced in at least 13 state legislatures in 1975.

Human dignity and human rights are everyone's concern. They should be protected and promoted by society through its legal institutions. Thus the American Catholic bishops have repeatedly endorsed an amendment to the Constitution which will effectively reverse the abortion decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. For "the existence of human rights and the fragility with which they are maintained places a claim on society to provide bulwarks of protection for individuals. A society committed to justice, equality and freedom must establish a system of law that protects the rights of each person while maintaining order and promoting the common good."

Program Suggestions

Events of the past two years have made it clear that a constitutional amendment is absolutely necessary in

order to assure any protection for unborn children. The U.S. Catholic Conference, in testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, proposed the following principles that should govern the drafting of an amendment:

- The amendment should establish that the unborn child is a person under the law in the terms of the Constitution from conception on.
- The Constitution should express a commitment to the preservation of life to the maximum degree possible. The protection resulting therefrom should be universal.
- The proposed amendment should give the states the power to enact enabling legislation, and to provide for ancillary matters such as record keeping, etc.
- The right to life is described in the Declaration of Independence as “unalienable” and as a right with which all men are endowed by the Creator. The amendment should restore the basic constitutional protection for this human right to the unborn child.

In order to change the existing social atmosphere allowing abortion virtually on request, citizen activity is necessary at every level. This activity has been carried on effectively by various pro-life organizations, but for maximum effectiveness, a pro-life group should exist in every parish. This group will serve to inform parish leaders, to stimulate a public information program, and to help direct political action. The following activities are important.

Political Action

Systematic efforts are necessary to persuade Congress to pass a constitutional amendment and to create a legal structure that prohibits permissive abortion. This includes personal visits to elected representatives, continual letter writing and sending of significant articles or information to remind the Representatives of your concerns.

The effort to pass an amendment includes asking each Congressman to sponsor a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution. Human Life Amendments generally affirm that the basic legal rights of the person should adhere to human life from its biological beginnings at fertilization. (More information on specific wording and resolution numbers can be obtained by writing to the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (address listed below).) For purposes of sponsorship the choice of a specific amendment should be left to the Representative. The important point of sponsorship is that the Congressman expresses a political commitment to reverse the meaning and intent of the Supreme Court’s abortion rulings. Those Congressmen who have sponsored a states’ rights constitutional amendment (these proposals simply leave it to the states whether they will prohibit or allow abortions in any way) should also be asked to co-sponsor a Human Life Amendment.

If you organize a new pro-life group or join an already existing one, it is important that in the group one person be assigned the responsibility of co-ordinating liaison work with the Congressman from the district and the two senators from the state. Ideally, there should be one person who holds a similar responsibility for the totality of each congressional district. These congressional liaison people usually work in concert with the various national pro-life organizations, e.g., National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, or the National Right to Life Committee. Write to these groups and inform them of the name of your congressional liaison person.

Congressional liaison work would involve researching and monitoring the Representative’s legislative action, votes, statements, etc.; forwarding to the Representative’s office pertinent newspaper editorials and other news on abortion-related activities from within the district or state; organizing meetings with the Congressman both in Washington and in the home district; relaying to your group program directives on congressional matters sent out by the national offices, etc.

Efforts to persuade state legislatures to enact laws and regulations that restrict the practice of abortion to the maximum extent possible are needed. Visits, letter-writing and occasional phone calls are necessary as described above.

The various Right to Life and Pro-Life organizations in your state or locale will be able to provide specific input for such activity. Some national resources include:

- Information on the congressional dimensions of the amendment process can be obtained from: National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, 1707 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
- Information on other specific aspects of federal and state legislation is available from: Bishops’ Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.
- General information on right to life activities is available from: National Right to Life Committee, National Press Bldg., Rm. 557, 529 14th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20045.
- Information on youth pro-life activities is available from: National Youth Pro-Life Coalition, 236 Mass. Ave., Room 209, Congressional Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Public Information

Support of public opposition to abortion on request and clarification of some of the issues that create uncertainty in people’s minds require continual monitoring of the media. Competent spokespersons should seek opportunities to publish articles, to speak out on TV and radio shows, and to take part in community programs where the issue is debated. Doctors and

ABORTION, ATTITUDES, AND THE LAW

The enclosed booklet, Abortion, Attitudes, and the Law contains data which was compiled by De Vries and Associates, a highly respected polling firm commissioned by the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, Inc. to sample public opinion on a wide range of pro-life issues. We think that the information would be especially helpful to priests. The poll indicates that:

- A. Priests/ministers rank at the top in confidence level.
- B. People expect "guidance on moral issues" from priests even if it means that the priest will get involved in politics.
- C. Priests rank fourth out of 23 reliable information sources.

The implications of these findings and others in the study indicate that:

- A. Priests should be encouraged to study the issue of abortion laws, and to provide information and motivation to their people. They should approach the abortion question in the context of other respect life issues, and avoid a one-issue approach.
- B. Priests can give "moral guidance," and also point to political implications of the moral guidance.
- C. Priests should work closely with doctors and lawyers in providing leadership and motivation to their people.
- D. At the level of political activity, priests should organize pro-life groups and provide information and tactical advice to such groups.
- E. In attempting to build public understanding of the moral issue, priests should elicit as much ecumenical understanding and support as possible.

We would encourage you to study the entire document. Some of the findings may tend to support your personal impressions and others may surprise you. In either case, we feel that the study will assist your determining what role your people expect you to play in some of the more profound questions of public and personal morality.

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nurses should be encouraged to take part in this public information effort.

Ultimately, the law is the great educator on human rights issues. The public education process must be accompanied by a proper articulation of the rights of the unborn in the law.

The bibliography below should be of assistance in highlighting valuable educational and research materials.

Education

An accurate knowledge and understanding of the growth and development of the unborn child leads to a more clearly reasoned opposition to abortion. Thus, it is important to include information on conception, pregnancy, fetal development and childbirth in educational programs, especially for junior high school students and onwards. Several textbooks for use in high schools and adult education programs are now available:

- *Human Life: Our Legacy and our Challenge*, Marcy Cavanagh Sneed (ed.), N.Y., McGraw Hill, 1975. Classroom tested, *Human Life* provides a comprehensive look at the life issues by specialists in the fields of political science, law, natural science, sociology, mental health, and others. The program concerns itself with positive values, and contrasts these values with the current attacks that threaten or ignore the value and dignity of human life — abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, etc. Discussion questions and bibliographies for each chapter are included. Good for high school and adult education programs as well as for popular reading. Cost: \$4 (discount for bulk orders, \$3 ea.). [Webster/McGraw Hill, 1221 Ave. of the Americas, N.Y. 10020]
- *Choose Life*, Indiana Catholic Conference. A curriculum guide for teachers and a manual for students for use in upper grade school years. The program covers the abortion issue in the context of other pro-life concerns and is quite effective. For information: Indiana Catholic Conference, 442 Illinois Bldg., Illinois & Market Sts., Indianapolis, Ind. 46204.
- *Love for Life*, Right to Life of So. Calif., 301 S. Kingsley Dr., Los Angeles, Calif. 90020. Cost: \$1.50. Quantity rates available.
- *Abortion: A Study in Human Values*, Committee for Life, 21 Rockville Ave., Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11570. Donation: \$5.00.

Social Action

Assistance to women with problem pregnancies and their unborn children requires a combined effort of voluntary agencies and professional resources. Volunteers can be trained to take phone calls, and to help women in need. Part of the help may require assistance of physicians, social workers and psychologists.

- Pregnancy counseling and Birthright programs enlist volunteers to provide one-to-one assistance to pregnant women in distress. More than 600 counseling centers are now operating in the United States. A complete listing of these centers is available for \$1.00 from: Alternatives to Abortion, Hillcrest 511, Madison & 16th Sts., Toledo, Ohio 43624. Information for setting up a pregnancy counseling service, as well as a periodic newsletter, are also available from Alternatives to Abortion.
- The local Catholic Charities organization, or its equivalent, is a valuable resource and guide to those individuals or citizen groups who wish to become more involved in some particular program to assist pregnant women and their children. Check your local telephone directory or write to: National Conference of Catholic Charities, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Special Pro-Life Projects

Some type of activity on or around January 22 each year is useful to call attention to the Supreme Court's 1973 abortion decisions, and to give public witness to the strength of the pro-life effort and the determination of a majority of people who believe some Congressional action is appropriate.

Information on such activities in Washington, D.C. can be obtained from the National Right to Life Committee, National Press Bldg., Rm. 557, 529 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20045. Your state pro-life office will have information regarding local events.

Bibliography and Resource Materials

These materials are listed in addition to those mentioned above under "Program Suggestions."

Books/Pamphlets

Abortion, Attitudes and the Law, 16-page booklet published by the Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities and Our Sunday Visitor (1975). This booklet contains an analysis of the main findings of a study of public attitudes toward abortion and the legal and political implications thereof. The findings are consistent with past polls in showing that the majority of Americans do not agree with the Supreme Court and would favor some restriction of the present abortion-on-request situation in the United States. Available from: Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Documentation on the Right to Life and Abortion. United States Catholic Conference. 1974. Contains the testimony of the U.S. bishops on a human life constitutional amendment to the United States Constitution, submitted before the U.S. Senate at hearings held March 7, 1974. This booklet should prove a valuable aid in parish education programs. Available from: USCC Publications, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Cost: 75¢. Quantity rates available.

The Unborn

Life in Our Hands, Valerie V. Dillon, 1973. Considers contemporary ethical/medical questions, including abortion, sterilization, euthanasia, and other pertinent topics. Available from: Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities. Cost: \$1.25. Quantity rates available.

The Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives, John T. Noonan, Jr. (ed.), 1970, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 276 pp., \$2.95, paper. Seven outstanding scholars probe the moral and legal aspects of the abortion issue.

Abortion and Social Justice, Thomas W. Hilgers and Dennis J. Horan (eds.). Sheed & Ward, 1972. A valuable collection of essays on all aspects of the abortion question. Available from: Sheed & Ward, 6700 Squibble Rd., Mission, Kansas 66202. Cost: \$3.95.

Nine Facts to Know About Abortion, Valerie V. Dillon (1974). Well done 16-page question and answer pamphlet. Covers medical, legal, biological, and theological aspects of abortion; includes select bibliography. Available from: Indiana Catholic Conference, 442 Illinois Bldg., Illinois & Market Sts., Indianapolis, Ind. 46204. Single copies: 25¢. Quantity rates available. Spanish edition available from Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities. Cost: 25¢.

The Ethics of Fetal Research, Paul Ramsey, 1975. New Haven, Conn., Yale Univ. Press (149 York St.). Ramsey outlines the basic ethical issues involved in fetal research, and their relevance for public policy. His treatment is basic to the discussion of government regulation of fetal research. Cost: \$2.95.

The Human Life Review, James McFadden (ed.). This quarterly journal provides important documentation from law, medicine and the social sciences on pro-life issues. It is a professional journal intended for special use in libraries and in providing a permanent compilation of important texts that present a pro-life perspective. Write: Human Life Review, Rm. 540, 150 E. 35th St., New York, N.Y. 10016. Cost: \$2.50 a copy.

National Right to Life News. Provides general coverage of right-to-life events and activities. Published monthly by National Right to Life Committee, Suite 557, National Press Bldg., 529 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20045. Subscription rate: \$6 yrly.

How to Teach the Pro-Life Story, Dr. & Mrs. J. C. Willke, 1973, Cincinnati, Hiltz & Hayes Pub. Co. (6304 Hamilton Ave.) A handbook for teachers and lecturers. Provides substantive data plus educational techniques and a wide array of informational tactics. Cost: \$2.95.

Audio/Visuals

The First Days of Life, 24 min., color. Eloquently shows the humanity of the unborn child, from the very beginning of life through delivery. Pictures of children of various ages vividly point out that life is indeed a continuum. By far one of the best films in this area. Purchase: \$275 (previews available); Rental: \$20 per showing. Available from: For Life, Inc., 1917 Xerxes Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55411. Tel: 612/521-6408.

Mother Tiger, Mother Tiger, 11 min., color. Using very little dialogue, the film shows a mother's struggle, despair and eventual acceptance of her retarded child. Reaffirms the right to life of each person, and brings out the real beauty of each child too often rejected by a perfection-oriented society. Purchase: \$150; Rental: \$13. Cat. No. S202. Teleketics. Franciscan Communications Center, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

And God Made Man, filmspot by Fr. Tom Royer, color. Shows the beauty and humanity of the developing baby prior to birth. No dialogue, but the background music and use of a heartbeat bring the developing child even more dramatically alive. Good for use in classroom or church before speaking of the humanity of the unborn child. Available from: Office of Communications, 612 E. Park Ave., Champaign, Ill. 61820. Tel: 217/352-8364. Cost: \$25.

The Choice, filmspot by Fr. Tom Royer, color. Beautifully illustrates the developing child prior to birth, as in *And God Made Man*, with same excellent use of background music and heartbeat. Film shifts dramatically to show in separated segments, pictures of unborn children destroyed by abortion. Dialogue consists only of a young woman saying "Abortion is a serious choice. Think about it." Quite effective. Available from: Office of Communications, 612 E. Park Ave., Champaign, Ill. 61820. Cost: \$25.

Leo Beurman, 13 min., color, 16 mm. An inspirational film about a day in the life of a severely handicapped man — dwarfed, crippled and deaf almost from birth — whose unquenchable spirit has enabled him to lead a fruitful life. Purchase: \$190; Rental: 10% of list price. Available from: Centron Educational Films, 1621 W. 9th St., Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

Celebration in Fresh Powder, 28 min., color, 16 mm. Confronts the confusion and pressures a high school girl goes through when she becomes pregnant out of wedlock, and she must decide whether to abort, marry the child's father, or have the baby outside of marriage. Purchase: \$325; Rental: \$18.95 a day (Also in b/w. Purchase: \$160; Rental: \$12.95 a day.) Available from: Paulist Productions, P.O. Box 1057, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

Abortion — A Woman's Decision, 22 min., color, 16 mm. A dramatic presentation of how a pregnant high school girl comes to the decision not to have an abortion. Purchase: \$200; Rental \$25 (must state dates film is desired). Available from: ACTA Films, 4848 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill. 60640.

Legal, Medical & Moral Implications in the Advancement in the Life Sciences, cassette by Father Charles Carroll, Carroll, an episcopal priest, talks about the implications for abortion and euthanasia, relating them to the Nazi experience. Available from: For Life, Inc. Cost: \$4.25 plus postage.

Birthday, 7 min., 16mm., color. The story of a woman's decision to give birth rather than have an abortion. Available from: Archdiocesan Communications Center, 50 Oak St., San Francisco, Calif. 94102. Purchase \$65; Rental, \$10.

Marriage and Family Life

A man and a woman who love one another, the smile of a child, the peace of a home: here is the wordless but astoundingly pervasive sermon in which every man can already discern, as it were shining through, the reflection of another love and its infinite appeal.

Pope Paul VI to the Teams of Our Lady

Although eight out of ten Americans over 18 years of age see a happy family life as their number one goal, the popular image of the American family is negative and confused.

- The steadily increasing divorce rate has prompted some to speak of “throwaway marriage.” Yet close to 75% of American couples remain in their first marriage, with some realization of satisfaction and success.
- Communes, “living together,” and serial monogamy are sometimes called alternatives to marriage and family life. But on closer investigation, these phenomena are found to be efforts to insure the family-oriented value of stability, and to achieve some of the advantages and rewards of the traditional pattern of marital living.
- The alienation of the young, youthful runaways, and the irresponsible use of drugs, alcohol and sex have been seen as a rejection of traditional values. Increasingly, they are found to be the result of poor marriages and the lack of familial relationships, as well as consequences of the overall permissiveness in society.

Unfortunately, the problems — and tragedies — of family life have dominated public attention and led to two erroneous conclusions.

1. The family has had it. It is a destructive force which will be rejected and ultimately replaced by some new system of interpersonal relationships.
2. The breakdown of family life is symptomatic of the overall moral decline in society. The only way for families to survive is by isolating themselves from the general society.

If these were the only options, future prospects would indeed be gloomy. But there are other explanations for the problems affecting marriage and family life. These lead to some more hopeful predictions for the future.

First of all, rapid social change is an obvious facet of the contemporary world. Although change is often a sign of progress, at the personal level it can also be quite unsettling. Continued change creates tension for any institution, including the family.

We can expect that the next quarter century will continue to be a period of change. Yet it is clearer today than ever before that people must determine the course of change, rather than merely be the subjects of uncontrolled trends and forces.

It is a demonstrated fact of history that the family has always manifested inner strength and/or resilience which have enabled it to adjust and adapt to changes in society. This resilience prompts family expert Betty Yorburg to predict that “the nuclear family will not only perdure into the 21st century, but it will be stronger than ever.”

Although debates about the nuclear family have been commonplace, the overwhelming majority of family specialists agree that the nuclear family is here to stay. However, the American model of the nuclear family has often been described as “isolated.” It is this aspect that has produced considerable tension and strain.

A newly married couple, separated from family and friends, living in a new environment, caught up in the competition attendant on the man’s employment status, frequently experienced feelings of isolation — and at times helplessness. The presence of kin or of close friends to share the joyful events of the early

years of marriage, to provide advice or encouragement in meeting problems, was generally unavailable.

But the assumption that once a couple married, their ability “to go it alone” was necessary to prove their maturity no longer finds much acceptance. Many young people also experience separation from their parent families during years at college or in military service, and relocation is thus not something new and different. Mobility is pretty much institutionalized in our culture, and is generally accepted as a fact of life. Moreover, the availability of communications and transportation facilities has largely nullified the effects of great distance. The telephone makes it fairly easy for people “to keep in touch,” and modern transportation facilities provide the opportunity for parents to visit the young marrieds.

Consequently, young couples are more prepared for the problems of nuclear family living. They have learned to create new kinship networks that take the place of families and old neighborhood friends. Thus, the contemporary family need not be isolated, nor feel the effects of separation. In fact, we speak of the present-day family as having developed a new type of extension that meets the personal, emotional needs formerly met by a kinship or clan system. Perhaps the most important change that has taken place is that the function of the present-day nuclear family in meeting the psychological and emotional needs of its own members receives major emphasis, while the individual family unit in an extended family system was considered important for its contribution to the functioning of the entire clan.

At any rate, there are some basic human needs that are met by the contemporary nuclear family, and some adaptations that seem likely. Given positive progress in these areas, the value and importance of the family will be heightened. We now turn to a closer examination of these facets of today’s nuclear family.

Intimacy

Intimacy — a recognized human need — is best achieved in a stable one-to-one relationship. As Andrew Greeley notes, “The real problem is not so much that the family is falling apart, but that expectations of the physical and psychological rewards of family life are growing far more rapidly than our capacities to deal with the challenges and problems of human intimacy.”

In recent years, marriage has been seen not simply as a contract or agreement, but as a partnership, a mutual relationship, a community of persons. Partnership and mutuality imply equality, and one of the beneficial effects of the women’s liberation movement is to enable women to see themselves as equal partners in marriage. Each person brings to marriage his or her own abilities, temperament and talents. Spouses are not identical, but they should strive to complement one another.

In order to achieve unity in marriage, people need incentive and continual motivation. Husband and wife

should support one another in developing their personal potential.

Marriage is the unique interpersonal relationship in which opportunities abound for personal development. Marriage can be a continuing, evolving, developing process of growth for both man and woman. To the extent that each partner becomes more fully a person, the marriage is enriched. And to the extent that the marriage union grows stronger, both partners, and their children, feel more secure.

But marriage is not simply a growth process for individuals. Marriage is also a deeply personal and loving relationship between a man and a woman. In a highly competitive and technologized society, it is the principal relationship that focuses on the person.

Human love is the dynamic element in marriage. It gives strength and endurance to the relationship. It is the gift whereby husband and wife freely give themselves to one another, without counting the cost or fearing the risks. But love is not some mystical, unidentifiable quality. It is found in the understanding, trust and empathy that husband and wife develop toward one another. It is deepened by communication, by play, by prayer. It is refined in the tension, struggles and conflicts that a couple experience and work out during the entire course of their married lives. Love strengthens the relationship and deepens the fidelity and commitment between husband and wife. It leads them to a greater unity, generosity and courage in solving ordinary problems and in facing the world and the future. Most importantly, human love is also a reflection of God’s love, and it brings special gifts from God — gifts of reconciliation, perfection and holiness.

The understanding of marriage as relationship and partnership, based on mutual love, has been upheld as a concept of the western, developed world, inspired by Judaeo-Christian teaching. It is increasingly being adopted as the ideal by developing nations as well. At the United Nations World Population Conference in 1974, more than 135 nations agrees that “family ties [should] be strengthened by giving recognition to the importance of love and mutual respect within the family unit.”

The Family as Transmitter of Values

Family specialist, Otto Pollak, has observed that the most important loss the family has suffered is the ability to set its own standards. The reassertion of values and moral principles in society can be expected to proceed from a reaffirmation of beliefs, values and norms within families. The family has always been looked upon as the transmitter of values and beliefs from one generation to the next.

The effort is simplified when the values and beliefs of the family unit are supported and promoted by the entire society. Unfortunately, that is not the case in a religiously heterogeneous society. It is even less true in American society where the commitment to pluralism and privacy and the influence of secularism further

deprive the family unit of support in the maintenance and protection of basic values. Thus, sexual freedom, divorce, and abortion are defended as matters of individual privacy, and their destructive effects on marriage and family life are ignored or denied. Moreover, although sexual irresponsibility, marital infidelity, and violence toward children are matters of personal failure or malice, they are also indications of society's failure or refusal to support the family, particularly in times of stress.

In the United States, Catholics are the largest religious group, but they are a minority in terms of the total population. Thus, Catholic families are faced with the difficulty of maintaining their distinctive beliefs, values and practices in a society where many of the teachings of their church are openly rejected. For example, the Catholic position on abortion has generated considerable antagonism toward Catholics. Religious freedoms, formerly protected under the Constitution, are now being challenged or denied. Moreover, the broadening application of the Supreme Court's "religious entanglement" and "divisiveness" theories may further isolate any religious group that publicly enunciates its theological beliefs.

As John L. Thomas, S.J., observes, "under these circumstances, a religious minority's problem is not primarily that its members must deal with one or more morally objectionable practices, but rather with what they must regard as a morally pathological social system. It is precisely this normalcy of the pathological . . . that makes the achievement of a minority's family values so difficult."

What, then, can Catholics or any religious group do to bring about public recognition of moral values? First of all, there must be a concerted effort within the family to clarify and reaffirm basic beliefs, values and moral principles. Parents and children must understand and be committed to a specific religious worldview, and be courageous and generous enough to live up to its demands.

Second, as Andrew Greeley notes, Catholics should insist on the importance of family and local community in the formulation of social policy affecting family life. Thereby, Catholics are able to build coalitions with Jews and with other Christians who are often committed to similar family values.

Third, the church, through its leadership and agencies, must support the efforts of Catholic families to live according to basic beliefs and values. This involves understanding and support by the clergy and religious orders, adaptation of religious education efforts at every level to cooperate with the family, and the social approval and recognition by the entire community of "the family in which various generations come together and help one another grow wiser and harmonize personal rights with the other requirements of social life." [*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No. 52]

Nonetheless, marriage and family life are experiencing special problems. In the United States, the

incidence of divorce has steadily increased during the past decade, and the divorce rate for 1974 was almost twice the rate for 1964. The widespread acceptance of infidelity and divorce tends to diminish the commitment to unity and permanence. The move toward no-fault divorce laws may lead to an increase in the divorce statistics, and to the termination of some marital relationships that might be stabilized.

However, stability and success in marriage are not dependent simply on laws, counseling facilities, or the absence of alternatives. Rather, people must come to understand that marriage is part of God's plan to realize in mankind His design of love. Just as God's love is faithful and creative, the marriage relationship should lead to interpersonal unity and to the generation and education of new members of the family. Unity, permanence and fidelity are both the goals and obligations of married couples, and these qualities lead to intimacy and to generosity. The practical result is the building of a family — the sharing of life through childbearing, and the willingness to provide care and compassion for children, old people and other persons in need.

Socialization and Education of Children

The family remains the best structure for the socialization and education of children. Efforts at communal childbearing, though successful in terms of indoctrination and discipline, do not compare with the family in assuring the proper emotional and psychological development of the child. As Margaret Mead has noted, "every time any society has tried to do away with the family as a childrearing institution, it has gotten into trouble."

The child must be seen as an individual person, with all the potentiality for discovery, learning, and understanding appropriate to his or her age and experience. The child is mankind's link with the future, not simply by allowing parents to extend themselves vicariously, but by being the agent through whom the wisdom and accomplishments of one age are transmitted to subsequent generations.

Yet the world is not an entirely friendly place for children. At times the child is blamed for problems and difficulties of the adult world. More often, adults — preoccupied with their own difficulties — ignore the needs and capabilities of children. Yet loving parents and a supportive family can stimulate and insure the emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth of the child.

Older Members of the Family

Intergenerational conflicts may be expected to decline as society finds new ways to integrate both the young and the old into the ongoing paths of daily living.

In every society there has been a generation gap of some sort, but its disruptive effects have generally been neutralized by social norms and institutions. The rapid change in the demographic structure in our

nation is already narrowing the gap. Whereas only a few years ago the under-25 generation captivated public attention, with a decrease in births the elderly are now increasing in number and asserting their claims for support and recognition by society. An increased effort by government to provide financial support for the very young and the elderly will give the aging greater independence and remove some of the stigma of being economically non-productive. At the same time, with the nuclear family reaching out for kinship support, older members of society can re-integrate and supply the emotional and social support required by children and their parents.

Family Life and the Church

Almost every religion has recognized the importance of the link between family life and church affiliation. In fact, the family was generally protected by the church because the transmission of religious values and the extension of church membership were best accomplished when viewed as basically family responsibilities.

Until very recently, the Catholic understanding of the theology of marriage was pretty much modeled on the theology of baptism. When a man and a woman exchanged their vows, they received the sacrament of matrimony which established a new commitment and conferred new responsibilities and special graces. Since Vatican II, we have emphasized that a complete understanding of marriage and family life is rooted in a more perfect understanding of the nature of the church. In other words, marriage, like the church, is “a sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind . . . an instrument for the achievement of such union and unity.” [*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, No. 11]

Moreover, Christian spouses, by their love for one another create a deeper unity and intensify their mutual fidelity. It is this ever deepening and developing human love which gives permanence to the marriage relationship. But this love relationship between a man and woman who are married in Christ is a sign of “that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and His Church.” [*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, No. 11] And the Church designates this relationship as sacramental because its continual existence at all times and among all peoples is a realistic example, a lasting witness to the love of God for His people, the love of Christ for the church.

The love relationship between the spouses is not simply a static sign or reminder of something else. It is also dynamic — it creates, sustains, heals and proclaims other realities beyond itself. Thus, the family springs from the marriage relationship, and the experience of marital intimacy leads to the initiation of new life. The distinctive feature of the Christian family is that Christian love is the pervasive and transforming force which enables its members to “proclaim both the present virtues of the kingdom of God and the

hope of a blessed life to come.” [*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No.35]

This relationship between the family and the church has always been acknowledged, though not always fully realized. Indeed, the Christian family at any time in history faces obstacles in accomplishing its work of evangelization. However, the prophetic role has always been a matter of highest priority for those couples involved in the apostolate of marriage and family life. Specifically, it has been a keystone of the educational efforts of Cana and Pre-Cana Conferences, it has motivated the organized activity of the Christian Family Movement, and it has been an inspiration and incentive to the Teams of Our Lady. Most recently, it has given impetus to the growth of Marriage Encounter throughout the United States.

Program Suggestions

A Pastoral Plan for Marriage and Family Life

The 1973 *Respect Life Handbook* described six important priorities for a Pastoral Plan that would engage the energies of an entire diocese. These priorities remain valid. We list them again as a backdrop for further program suggestions.

1. Development of a theology of marriage and family life, as a mutual effort of theologians and married couples.
2. Adult education directed toward all married couples and families to acquaint them with new developments in the church's teaching and with liturgical advances that particularly concern the family.
3. Priestly formation efforts to prepare seminarians and to update priests in regard to existing pastoral programs.
4. Wider secular involvement of church agencies. It remains a pressing need to involve the church in the general community, to expand the communications effort — especially via radio and TV — and to generate more sophisticated responses to laws and public policies affecting family life.
5. Family life and sex education courses. To counteract hedonistic or secularistic approaches to human sexuality and its relation to marriage, the church should emphasize Christian values and moral principles in educational efforts directed to the young.
6. Specific pastoral challenges. Among these is the problem of teenage marriage. Programs underway in at least 30 dioceses now seek to provide special preparation and counseling for young or otherwise immature couples.

Parish Programs

The parish is the basic geographic unit through which the church carries on the pastoral ministry. Parishes

differ according to demographic or sociological factors, and many pastoral efforts are diocesan or regional. Nonetheless, the parish should direct a great deal of its energies and resources toward the family unit, because the majority of people live in family units, and because the family itself can effectively collaborate in the parish's overall pastoral effort by reaching other persons or groups. A family-centered parish program includes the following priorities:

- ▲ Instructional programs for the growth of married couples and the engaged.
- Cana Conferences, Marriage Enrichment Programs, marriage courses.
- Semi-annual course on parents' preparation for the baptism of their children.
- Lecture series on child development, with special emphasis on the pre-school child.
- Preparation course for parents of First Communicants.
- Marriage and family living programs for high school students. Such a program can follow any standard text, but it should provide for selected couples to direct the course in their own homes for about six weeks.
- Education in sexuality directed toward parents of grade school children and correlated with a school or religious education program.
- Natural family planning program for couples.
- Periodic pre-natal education program, in conjunction with a local hospital.
- ▲ Spiritual development and renewal for families.
- Teams of Our Lady*
- Families for Prayer*
- Family Night Program.*
- Periodic Recollection Evening for Married Couples.
- Family Retreats.
- ▲ Social and recreational programs to build a spirit of community among couples and families.
- Annual picnic.
- Annual dance.
- Pot luck supper for families.
- ▲ Community action programs to support family life.
- Christian Family Movement*
- Involvement in school board activities, special community efforts in behalf of minorities.
- Development of collaboration with local pro-life groups.
- ▲ Ecumenical program to carry on a dialogue with

other churches in regard to mixed marriage, shared understandings of baptism, eucharist, church membership.

- ▲ Parish or community service efforts.
- Catechetical programs for disadvantaged children.
- Periodic visits by selected families to the sick and the elderly, especially those in institutions.

Family Resource Organizations

Teams of Our Lady, founded in France in 1938, and which numbers more than 22,000 families in the world today, attempts

- To develop conjugal spirituality in and through couples, and
- To bring Christ to these marriages.

Each Team is composed of five to eight couples who meet on a regular basis in the homes of the couples. Their meetings consist of (a) a shared meal together, (b) a period of prayer, including meditation on a Bible text, (c) time for sharing reflections, personal situations, professional problems, and spiritual insights, and (d) discussion of the month's topic. For information write: Teams of Our Lady, U.S. Secretariat, 8503 Chervil Rd., Lanham, Md. 20801. A bimonthly newsletter is published by Teams of Our Lady. Contact: Mr. & Mrs. P. Canan, 3724 Stoney Castle St., Olney, Md. 20832.

Families for Prayer Program. This is an intensive five-week program to be conducted at the parish level. It is designed to foster Christian values and attitudes toward the family, to promote family prayer, and to enable families to build those deep relationships in Christ which are the foundation of true and wholesome community. The Families for Prayer Program includes:

- *Liturgy Program.* Homily outlines and prayers of the faithful for five Sundays; Penance Service and Prayer Vigil.
- *Education Program.* Formats for use in the school or religious education program.
- *Home Program.* Reaches out to every home to enable families to work through the theme for each of the five weeks, and to build prayer life within the family unit.
- *Youth Program.* Extends the program to other individuals and groups within the parish.

Families for Prayer is a coordinated and integral program. The materials, which enable any parish to conduct the program, are available from: Families for Prayer, 773 Madison Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12208. Tel. 518/462-6458

Family Night Program. Developed in the Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona, the program involves eight

* See "Family Resource Organizations," for program explanation.

weekly sessions in which the family works together to better explore and understand the values and commitments of family life. Each session includes prayers, a discussion format, some type of project to be worked on by the entire family. For information write to: Mr. & Mrs. T. Reilly, Family Life Office, 400 E. Monroe, Phoenix, Ariz. 85004. Tel. 602/257-0030.

Christian Family Movement. This is a married couples' movement, that began as small, community-oriented groups of couples dedicated to positive action on local problems. CFM, which is now an ecumenical movement, and which in 1969 established a Spanish-speaking counterpart, *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano*, reaches more than 100,000 couples in the world today. CFM has been an important part of the family life movement, and during its history has trained large numbers of couples for social action, for family life education, and for involvement in other specific areas of the church's life in the United States. CFM publishes a monthly newsletter, as well as training and leadership materials. For information write: Christian Family Movement, 1655 W. Jackson, Chicago, Ill. 60612. Tel. 312/829-6101.

Marriage Encounter. In the past five years, Marriage Encounter has enjoyed rapid growth and expansion across the country. Recognizing that intimacy and communication are best worked out in the encounter of persons, Marriage Encounter offers couples a chance to encounter themselves as spouses, and to encounter God in their status as married couples, as people in love. The logical outreach of Marriage Encounter is the ability of Christian families to encounter other families and persons and to share with them some measure of their love and intimacy.

The movement takes its name from the Encounter Weekend, during which some 10 to 15 couples, guided by a specially trained team, take part in a program directed toward building communication between the spouses.

Information on Encounter available from the national office: Marriage Encounter, Suite 108, 10059 Manchester, Warson Woods, MO 63122.

Since not every couple is immediately inclined to make an Encounter Weekend, and since in some areas facilities are not readily available, leaders of the Marriage Encounter movement have developed a series of other programs that can be made available to a wider audience. Formats and recommendations for the following programs are available from the Marriage Encounter Resource Community. These programs are parish oriented, are for all couples, whether or not they have made an Encounter, and can be effectively worked out with good leadership.

- *Marriage Course for High School Students.* Involves using couples and educators who can impart positive attitudes on marriage and family life to high school students. Stresses an informal approach drawing insights from personal experience.

- *Parenthood Conferences.* An evening's conference directed toward parents, conducted by parents who have refined the various parenthood theories through personal experience.
- *Enrichment Programs for Married Couples and Families.* This involves a variety of programs to help alert couples to the value of their personal relationship, their responsibilities and effectiveness as parents, their unique abilities to provide preparation for the sacraments to children and youth.

For information write: Marriage Encounter Resource Community, 295 Northern Blvd., Great Neck, N.Y. 11021. Tel. 516/487-1940.

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You Haven't Changed a Bit, 15 min., color, Teleketics. Rental: \$15; Purchase: \$185. Cat. No. 8076. After quarreling, a young married couple take separate vacations with their parents, only to discover that though shaped by their pasts, their real identity lies in their future together.

The Weekend, 15 min., color, Teleketics. Rental: \$15; Purchase: \$185. Cat. No. 8077. A rained-out weekend becomes a time of rediscovery for a middle-aged couple, whose lack of communication during their married life has driven them apart.

Wait Till Your Father Gets Home, 11 min., color, Teleketics. Rental: \$13; Purchase: \$140. Cat. No. 8508. A group of young people candidly talk about what they think sex roles ought to be within marriage. Guaranteed to elicit strong responses — especially from girls. Good for an active discussion among high school students.

Not Together Now: End of a Marriage, 25 min., color. Rent: \$30; Purchase: \$325. Polymorph Films, 331 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. 02115. Tel. 617/262-5960. Good for discussion starter. Realistic interviews with a presently separated couple who discuss why they married,

the events leading to the separation, children involved, and the influence of the changing role of women on the marriage.

Cassettes

St. Anthony Messenger Press' 5-part cassette series on *Creative Marriage*, by Clayton C. Barbeau, well-known author and lecturer in the field of marriage and family life. Includes (1) "Current Myths About Marriage," (2) "Communications in Marriage," (3) "Sexuality in Marriage," (4) "Marriage: The Creative Task," and (5) "The Future of the Family." Available from: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1615 Republic St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45210. Tel. 513/241-5616. Cost: \$5.95 ea., \$29.75 for the 5-part series. Over \$25, allow 20% discount. Postage additional, unless prepaid.

Social Conditions and the Family

The family, founded upon marriage freely contracted, one and indissoluble, must be regarded as the natural, primary cell of human society. The interests of the family, therefore, must be taken very specially into consideration in social and economic affairs, as well as in the spheres of faith and morals. For all of these have to do with strengthening the family and assisting it in the fulfillment of its mission.

Pacem in Terris

There is almost universal agreement today that the family is the basic social unit, on which the welfare of individuals, as well as society itself, depends. Twentieth century Catholic teaching has been quite explicit in affirming that interest and concern for the well-being of the family flow from a commitment to human dignity and the well-being of the individual. It has given equal emphasis to the fact that order and stability in society are very much dependent on order and stability in the family, so that society not only has obligations to support family life but has reasons of self-interest for doing so. The importance of the family and society's responsibility to sustain and protect the family have also become major commitments of the United Nations. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that "the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State."

Because society is committed to the dignity and well-being of each individual person, and because the family is the primary human community in which the individual person is born, nurtured and develops his or her potential, society finds its own interests closely tied to the stability of the family. Moreover, experience has shown that social forces and trends have a serious impact on family functioning and family relationships.

Thus, in setting priorities, in formulating social policies, and in pursuing programs of social development, society should give primary attention to the needs of the family. The development of a national family policy is one way in which government may enable and assist the family to fulfill its own responsi-

bilities. A national family policy need not be complex and detailed, but it should serve as a cornerstone for other social legislation. As Daniel P. Moynihan describes it:

A national family policy need only declare that it is the policy of the American government to promote the stability and well-being of the American family; that the social programs of the federal government will be formulated and administered with this object in mind; and finally that the President, or some person designated by him, perhaps the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, will report to the Congress on the condition of the American family in all its many facets — not of *the* American family, for there is yet no such thing, but rather of the great range of American families in terms of regions, national origins and economic status. (Cf. Daniel P. Moynihan, *Coping: On the Practice of Government*, N.Y. Random House, 1973, pp. 69-79.)

In keeping with an overall respect for human life, and in line specifically with our concern for the family as "the primary cell of human society," we now turn our attention to some of the economic and social matters — and to the moral principles that should guide decision-making — which pertain to efforts to strengthen the family and assist it in the fulfillment of its mission.

Economic Life

The economic order must be based upon recognition of the fundamental dignity of the human person. Human dignity derives from the fact that each person has been called into existence by God and redeemed

by Jesus Christ, and is therefore destined for supernatural life and eternal union with God. Economic sufficiency and material affluence alone cannot fulfill the deepest longings of mankind, but they do provide an appropriate atmosphere for the development of the human person, as well as the pursuit of social justice and spiritual growth. The family, then, is entitled to a reasonable share of material goods and to a standard of living that enables it to achieve intimacy, unity and charity among its members. To achieve its goals the family should enjoy certain basic freedoms. It must be free from control or dominance by other institutions; it must be free from material or psychological pressures that limit its ability to function. Let us take the current worldwide economic crisis as an example.

World leaders meet to discuss economic theories and consider new economic policies or strategies, with the hope of fine-tuning the world economy. The man in the street may not understand the theories, but he knows that inflation is diminishing his buying power, that prices continue to rise, and that increasing unemployment threatens his job. According to a public opinion survey, at least half of the nation's families feel that the economic situation is now so unstable that they can no longer control their own economic problems.

In the economic and social realms, too, the dignity and complete vocation of the human person and the welfare of society as a whole are to be respected and promoted. For man is the source, the center, and the purpose of all economic and social life.

Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

With the continuation of worldwide economic instability, the poor suffer most. Subsistence and indeed survival become impossible, and starvation and disease violate the basic right to life.

In the developed nations, too, families feel the economic crunch, and their way of life is often seriously disrupted. Meeting existing financial obligations becomes difficult and sometimes impossible. Men are forced to work two jobs, and mothers of small children who would choose not to work outside the home, are often forced to seek employment, to the detriment of the marital relationship and their respective roles as parents. Granted, many American families have come to treat luxuries as necessities, but this does not diminish the reality of the economic instability that permeates family life and family relationships. Indeed this economic problem has its most damaging effects on the persons involved, for it often creates emotional duress and tension which disrupt family harmony.

The United Nations has called for a new world economic order that meets the needs of people in developing nations as well as those that are materially

successful. But serious questions must be faced in constructing a just and equitable economic order. How do we eliminate poverty and discrimination while committed to an economic system built on capitalism, individualism and free competition? How can we maintain the value of human life while allocating many of our resources to armaments and readiness for war? Clearly, the establishment of a new economic order demands struggling with these questions as well as a new commitment to human dignity and the stability of the family.

Employment/Income

A family's standard of living is generally dependent on its income. For the vast majority of people, work is the source of income and future financial security. The church's social teaching has always emphasized that the worker is entitled to a just wage, that is, a wage sufficient to give the worker and his family a standard of living in keeping with human dignity. The church does not consider a "just wage" to be simply an equitable payment for one person's labor; rather, in the overall economic order, it considers a just wage to be one calculated to support the worker and his or her family.

However, wages have generally reflected the amount of work, the skill of the worker, the length of employment, and the position held by the worker. Now, in many industrialized nations, where working conditions and wages have been equalized, something on an imbalance exists. Larger numbers of the work force are unmarried. Married and single persons receive the same wage, with the result that families bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden of supporting the next generation. In too many cases a man must moonlight or a woman must work outside the home so that the family can meet its living costs. One way of equalizing the financial burden and providing special assistance to families at the lowest income level is a family allowance system.

At any rate, income is but one aspect of work. The worker is also entitled to decent working conditions and to a feeling of dignity.

Every man has the right to work, . . . to equitable remuneration which will enable him and his family 'to lead a worthy life on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level' and to assistance in case of need arising from sickness or age.

A Call to Action

Two of the most important things in people's lives are what they do — i.e., their work — and who cares about them and their accomplishments. There is abundant evidence that when a person's job is stultifying, frustrating or unrewarding, his or her work performance suffers. Worse than that, the person

tends to lose self-esteem, and in time may give up working and become delinquent in terms of other responsibilities. It is important that government and industry try to eliminate dead-end jobs and generally improve working conditions, particularly in blue-collar jobs. But it is also important that American business take the white collar worker's family life into consideration and treat it with respect and regard. For example, continual relocation, constant travel, treating the employee as a possession of the company are practices that disrupt family life and destroy personal stability. Everyone needs some leisure and solitude to think, relax, and share the experiences of family growth.

In addition, there are still too many people who simply cannot find employment. Moreover, there are some — such as migrant farm workers — who are expected to work at low wages, to bend to agricultural exigencies, and to labor in trying and often dangerous working conditions. At every point, their family life is endangered. It is a credit to the church in the United States that it has utilized its own resources to improve the lives and working conditions of these people.

There are abundant research data to prove that unemployment and job uncertainty are major causes of family disorganization, particularly among the poor. This frequently leads to desertion, and to an increase in the number of fatherless families on welfare. The fracturing of the poor family inevitably leads to youth problems — school dropouts, drug use and criminal activity.

At the same time, most unemployed male heads of poor families are not lazy or irresponsible. There is abundant evidence that when people are given the choice to work, they tend to work and lead more organized lives. The availability of a suitable job is generally sufficient to get a person to work, and often it is incentive enough to undergo job training. One of the answers to the "welfare problem" is the availability of jobs, not for welfare mothers, but for the fathers of welfare children. In fact, forcing the welfare mother to work outside the home may only lead to greater family disorganization.

The special Health, Education and Welfare Department Task Force on *Work in America* concluded that the key to reducing family dependency on government lies in offering the main provider an opportunity to work full time at a living wage. Increasing job opportunities is not simply a government responsibility, but should be borne in part by private industry. To encourage such cooperation, the Task Force recommended employer tax incentives for hiring, training and upgrading workers from traditionally low-employment groups. Correspondingly, better tax breaks for low income families will encourage a more determined work effort. Furthermore, a good share of the resulting income can be expected to be spent in low-income areas, thus stimulating commerce and producing more jobs.

Specifically, a cooperative long-range effort by government and private industry would include:

- Adoption of educational policies at the local level to increase the employability of the disadvantaged.
- Expansion of on-the-job training.
- Acceleration of the training, placement, and promotion of the disadvantaged.
- Assumption by employers of responsibility for insuring that transportation systems link their establishments with low-income neighborhoods.

The Task Force does not have all the answers, but it recommends policies and strategies that will not only provide jobs, but will also improve the stability of family life for many of the nation's poor.

Housing and the Family

The insufficiency of housing to meet the needs of families seems to be a worldwide phenomenon. Poor housing has an adverse effect on family stability. In many nations, young couples must live with parents or family because there is no housing available, or at least not available at a reasonable price. In some cases the housing units are so small or poorly constructed that privacy and intimacy are impossible. Although the American ideal is private ownership of the single-family house, relatively few houses are being built, and those that are very often are high-priced or are in areas distant from the city. Moreover, new housing developments frequently involve the hidden cost of future tax rises for sewer development, police and fire protection, schools and other social services.

It is in fact the weakest who are the victims of dehumanizing living conditions, degrading for conscience and harmful for the family institution. The promiscuity of working people's housing makes a minimum of intimacy impossible; young couples waiting in vain for a decent dwelling at a price they can afford are demoralized and their union can thereby even be endangered; youth escape from a home which is too confined and seek in the streets compensations and companionships which cannot be supervised. It is the grave duty of those responsible to strive to control this process and to give it direction.

A Call to Action

Yet the single largest expenditure a typical family makes is the purchase of a home. The amount of the annual family budget devoted to housing is second only to food. In metropolitan America the general pattern is for a young couple to initially rent an apartment, and after some years and the birth of the first or second child to look forward to buying a home. Frequently, the apartment rental has been costly,

involving the accumulation of no equity and no savings to buy a house. Moreover, the family is often forced to buy their home in an outlying suburb which increases the cost of commuting and general transportation. The general indicators of house ownership are family income, age and education of the family head, and size of the family. And, as noted, inflation and recession have meant that housing construction has fallen off and that very little home building is taking place.

But couples and families should have adequate housing. Adequate housing not only involves basic shelter, but also the building of community among families, accessibility to stores, schools, churches and parks or other recreational areas. Quite obviously, housing policies are only one aspect of community and regional planning, which must also take into account the total needs of families.

Housing is a problem for middle-income families, but it is generally a crisis for the poor. So-called public housing has often been a qualified success at best and an unqualified failure at worst. The poor are frequently unable to afford anything other than substandard housing.

No one seems to have the answer to housing policy or strategies. However, the National Conference of Catholic Charities has formulated the following recommendations to guide the development of housing policy:

- Recognition of decent housing as a basic human right.
- Legislation designed to increase the housing supply in accordance with the goals of the 1949 and 1968 Housing Acts, with programs and appropriations designed to achieve measurable annual goals.
- Design of specific housing programs, apart from an income strategy, to provide housing for low-income individuals and families, and for the elderly, and the handicapped of all ages, in a decent, humane setting, respecting the right to mobility, and free choice of housing location regardless of income, race, religion, age or other personal or family characteristics frequently provoking discrimination in our society.
- Housing programs which insure more than mere physical shelter, which are a part of a total environment, which include social and community services designed for the enrichment, growth and comfort of persons and families.
- Federal encouragement of state and local housing finance and development agencies aimed particularly at provision of housing for low income families, the elimination of substandard and over-crowded housing, the integration of economic development with housing development.
- Adequate operating subsidies for existing public housing stock and the reinstatement of the public

housing modernization program, funded at levels equal to the need, to remedy deterioration. Also, an expansion of the public housing leasing program involving new construction as well as existing housing stock.

Health Care for Families

The right to “bodily integrity,” enunciated by Pope John XXIII in *Peace on Earth*, is the basis for assuring adequate health care to every person. Although scientific research and medical technology have enabled mankind to conquer many fatal diseases, many people still die each year because they do not receive adequate health care. In developed nations, like the United States, it is due to the lack of availability of medical care. By “lack of availability” we mean the inaccessibility of health services and/or the relatively high cost of health care for the ordinary person.

It is often said that the best health care is available in our country to the very rich and the very poor alike. The ordinary family, however, finds that a debilitating disease or the need for special surgery can quickly exhaust the family’s financial resources and create a variety of problems within the family. Consequently, national health care policies should be directed toward assisting families to obtain adequate health care. Present efforts to establish a national health insurance program should ultimately be beneficial to all families.

To watch over man’s health and improve it, to prevent disorders and cure them should they arise: is that not dedication to the service of life, the Creator’s first gift to man? This life is the source of joy when it springs forth, the beginning of a destiny that is unique each time and always admirable, whether it appears so or not, since it is called to bloom in endless happiness! That is why the professions devoted to bodily health carry out a noble and redoubtable task, and constitute one of the loftiest vocations in the service of man.

Pope Paul VI to the World Health Organization

The family has an active role to play in maintaining good health. Adequate health care includes health education, preventive health care, treatment of disease, therapy, and long-term health care. The responsibility for health education and preventive care can be met to a large degree within the family. So, too, some kinds of treatment or therapy can be handled by the family under the direction of a physician. The long-term care of the elderly and chronically ill — once the primary responsibility of the family — has gradually become institutionalized. However, ways could be found to combine the resources of the family and

professional health care facilities so that care and therapy could be provided for many people within the family. Family members can be taught to care for the sick, elderly and chronically ill. They are also uniquely able, in most cases, to provide the acceptance and compassion that are often more beneficial than institutionalized care. Moreover, given proper training and supervision, the family will derive benefit for itself from exercising charity toward its own sick and aging members.

Conclusion

We have considered some of the economic and social factors that influence family life. In our complex society, many of these factors are interconnected. Thus, an individual family may simultaneously feel the effects of inflation, unemployment, and the need for special health care. What is needed are not simply more social programs, but, rather, the formulation and implementation of policies directed primarily at supporting family life, and the integration of social programs that will in fact meet the needs of all families.

Although the state has a rightful concern for the social and economic needs of families and individuals, psychological and spiritual needs, as well as the need for human acceptance, are usually better met within the family. The total well-being of the individual, then, is best served when society supports and complements the family, so that it can achieve this end.

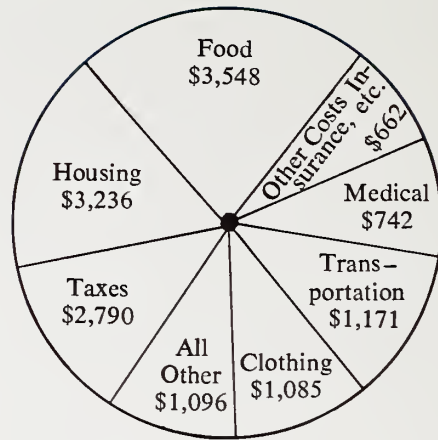
Program Suggestions

Economics and the Family Budget

As an object lesson in how economics affects the family, let's look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' budget for a family of four in the United States. Each year the Bureau publishes a set of "urban family budgets," that is, the amount of money an urban family of four people needs to live at three different standards of living: high, intermediate, and low. The hypothetical family consists of a 38-year-old husband, a wife who is not employed outside the home, and two children aged 13 and 18. The budget covers necessary living expenses, including insurance, but makes no allowance for savings. In November, 1974, the budgets were:

Higher Range	\$20,777
Intermediate Range	14,333
Lower Range	9,198

Let us look more closely at the intermediate budget, which represents the more typical family at a moderate standard of living. This budget presumes that the family owns a small home, bought six years earlier, on which it is making mortgage payments. The family generally owns a secondhand automobile, ordinary home appliances, has a telephone and TV set, and subscribes to a hospital-surgical plan



through the man's employment. Here is how the pie is divided.

The budget calculates expenses and shows what is needed to live, but there is no assurance that the wage-earner's income does in fact meet the budget. In many cases it does not. Then people must live at a lower standard, or else they must live in debt. Moreover, inflation can easily diminish actual spending power.

Parish Community Service Program

This program, developed by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, is an effort to involve the parish — its resources and personnel — in meeting the needs of some of its own members. Parishes taking part in the program employ their own Coordinator, who works with a volunteer staff. Family Services and Services to the Aged are the primary areas of activity. The Diocesan Charities Office provides training of personnel and serves as a back-up agency for the parishes. The purposes of the program are:

- To develop awareness among adult members of a parish of the needs of people in their neighborhood. The awareness generates a sense of responsibility on the part of the community to employ its own resources and utilize other community resources to provide needed services.
- To develop a leadership that will look beyond local needs to changing those situations that create social problems.

The program is a cooperative effort of priests, parish council, lay leadership, professional coordinator and voluntary staff. It is an attempt to extend the resources of the local church to those most in need.

Additional information is available from: Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago, 645 W. Randolph St., Chicago, Ill. 60606.

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Films

For God's Sake, 5 min., color, telespot. Interviews with

the poor, with special emphasis on children and the elderly. Teleketics, Franciscan Communications Center, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90015. Rental: \$8; Purchase: \$65. Cat. No. 8151.

Listen, Man, 60 sec. telespot. Shows what happens when the mutual family concerns of husband and wife take a back seat to harassed bill-paying and the demands of the husband's job. Teleketics. Cost: \$18. Cat. No. 8716.

Rat Race, 60 sec. telespot. Executive finds himself a stranger in his own home because of the time he spent in the "rat race" of travel and work. Teleketics. Cost: \$18. Cat. No. 8724.

Contact, 11 min., color. Documentary approach to contemporary ministry. Rewards and problems of encountering Christ in the inner city. Teleketics. Rental: \$13; Purchase: \$150. Cat. No. 8004.

Today's Children, 30 sec. telespot. Weary expressions of the poor juxtaposed with the expectant faces of their children. Teleketics. Cost: \$12. Cat. No. 8739.

Children

As living members of the family, children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy. For they will respond to the kindness of their parents with sentiments of gratitude, with love and trust. They will stand by them as children should when hardships overtake their parents and old age brings its loneliness.

Constitution on the Church in the
Modern World

The way a nation treats children tells much about its regard for human dignity. Although it has been customary to situate responsibility for the birth and rearing of children in the family, nevertheless, the state or social and economic structures have historically had more to say about the rules pertaining to childhood than the family or parents.

In recent years, a new attitude has been developing — an attitude which regards the child as a person with rights of his or her own, protectable by law before as well as after birth. The *UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child* specifically extended the rights and freedoms of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* to the child, so that “he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good the rights and freedoms” generally accorded to adults.

At present, there is widespread concern in our society for the rights of children, and for laws and policies based on “the best interests of the child.” It is difficult to predict where this concern will lead, since the U.S. Supreme Court’s denial of personhood to unborn children, the recent efforts to re-institute child labor, and the significant incidence of child abuse and child neglect violate the rights and interests of the child.

But efforts to insure basic rights for children are based on the recognition that the child is indeed a person, and not simply a possession of the state or of parents. In order to contribute to the growing dialogue on the child, we will focus on a theology of childhood, the child as subject of rights, and specific examples of threats to the child’s welfare.

Theology of Childhood

Christianity has always held the child in high esteem. By insisting on infant baptism it has given the child equal status with all others in the Christian community. Yet a theology of childhood has never developed. In one of his theological investigations, Karl Rahner has reflected on childhood, in the hope of providing insights for parents and those who work with children. Customarily, we look at the adult person, and then affirm of the child what we believe of the adult. Rahner insists that from the beginning the child is in possession of that value and those depths which are implied in the name of man. This section will correlate Rahner’s insights with the information we have from child development and the behavioral sciences.

First of all, the child is a human being. He or she is one of us. Science enables us to trace the biological heritage of the human infant back through the stages of uterine life to his or her biological parents. Biology does not determine personhood, but it does establish, for each human being, a basic relationship with all humanity. Yet from the moment of conception the child is also genetically unique, different from every other individual who also possesses a human nature. At every stage of life, the child is developing his or her physical, psychological, intellectual and spiritual capabilities. These are as much a part of the child’s heritage as identification with parents, family, nationality and social status.

Childhood, then, is one stage of human existence. The unborn fetus, the infant, the young child is from the outset the same person he or she will be recognized as when reaching adult status. From the outset, the

child possesses the value and the depths of all that is implied in the term “person,” and has the potential for all that will subsequently develop. With the support of parents, family and society, the child travels the course of self-discovery, self-realization and self-fulfillment. The whole process of growth and development is nothing more for each child than a gradual realization of who he or she is.

But childhood is for children. For each of us, childhood is a stage in our personal history with events and accomplishments unique to that time. For every child, childhood is the period of rapid growth and development, the time of discovery, the time of fantasy and mystery. Adults must try to recognize the value of childhood and understand children by reflecting on their own experience as children. They must learn from children what childhood is all about. This, above all else, enables us to see the child as a person, and to know the unique problems that children experience. It enables us to bring to the child the resources of the adult world and the Christian community.

It is important to realize that children trust adults and give adults important status. The child’s problems differ from those of the adult, but they are no less important or compelling. One of the recurrent themes in discussions with children is that adults should realize that children have feelings, that they can be hurt deeply by non-recognition, by rejection, or by constantly being treated as subordinates whose problems are always secondary to those of adults.

The child is also a child of God. The term is applied metaphorically to all Christians, but it has special meaning in the more restricted sense in which it is applied to children. Childhood has special significance in God’s plan of salvation, and the child has a special relationship with God as One who loves him. The child may well learn of creation, redemption and eternal happiness through more or less formal religious instruction. But the child learns of God’s love through parents and family. It is important to emphasize the love of father *and* mother as reflecting the total love of God. The child’s sense of wonder and awe, his openness to all that is new and mysterious, enable the child to formulate a special relationship with God. In contrast with adults, the child’s view of the future is usually more optimistic, more full of hope.

But most importantly, the child (and the adult) can learn from the Gospel narratives of Christ’s relationship with children. Jesus places children in a favored position and gives them a special place among those who believe in Him. Our Lord praises the openness and innocence of children, and speaks with indignation of those who would threaten them. Jesus treats the child as a child, not merely as an adult-to-be. He commends the child’s ability to learn, the child’s trust and confidence, and the child’s humility. Finally, Jesus pays attention to children, and in blessing them, proclaims their right to future existence.

The Rights of Children

The more that the child’s personhood and individuality are acknowledged, the more we are led to consider the child’s rights. In recent years a good deal has been written about the rights of the child, primarily to set the stage for legal protection and for specific social programs to benefit children. The *UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child* provides the most comprehensive listing of children’s rights. It highlights the responsibilities of society and of specific groups to insure that children do in fact enjoy such rights. For our discussion, we will center attention on some of the most basic rights as they apply to children.

The Right to Life. The right to life extends to the entire process of human growth and development. Prenatal care of the mother as well as the child, proper neonatal care for the newborn, and pediatric care throughout childhood are means of insuring the right to life in the early years. Adequate nutrition, special therapeutic care for the sick or disadvantaged child, clean air and a healthy environment enable the child to develop his or her physical and mental faculties.

The right to life includes personal security and requires legal protection. By personal security we mean that the child should be protected from destructive and harmful actions, or from situations that will endanger his life or his safety. This protection of the law should be present from conception onward. The child should be protected from abortion and infanticide, child abuse and neglect, from the effects of harmful drugs, noxious chemicals, lead poisoning. Special programs of accident protection should be directed to children and their parents. A good example is the effort to protect children from automobile accidents by imposing special speed limits in school zones. And child labor laws have traditionally been designed to prohibit exploitation of children.

Society should also take measures to see to it that children do not become the victims of violence, social upheaval, prejudice or exploitation. For instance, the continued conflict in Northern Ireland seems to be especially destructive for children, although they may not be the immediate victims of the bombings, killings or violent acts. In the United States, portrayals of violence in the movies and on TV are especially damaging to children.

The Right to Acceptance and Freedom. Every child is entitled to an environment in which he or she is accepted as a person, and given the love, affection, human support and recognition appropriate to membership in the human community. Ordinarily, these qualities are provided by the family, and society should assist the family in providing this care. Acceptance of the child as a person presumes security and responsibility on the part of parents. In some cases parents need special assistance to enable them to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

The child has the right to a secure environment

even if his parents cannot or will not provide it. Thus adoption, foster care, institutionalized care and special programs of family assistance for children with special needs should be expanded to insure that the shelter, care and compassion ordinarily found in the family unit will be readily available to all children.

Freedom always implies responsibility and duty. In the cases of children, freedom should expand and disciplinary control decrease as the child grows older and becomes better able to make prudent decisions and to assume responsibilities and duties. But absolute freedom and absence of all restraint can be harmful for the child because they do not help him develop the necessary self-restraint.

A proper understanding of freedom for the child involves expanding the child's horizons and visions, so that he or she may aspire to and achieve a place in the human family appropriate to his or her talents and abilities. The *UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child* sums it up well in stating that the child "shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellowmen."

The Right to the Means Necessary and Suitable for the Proper Development of Life. Basic to insuring equal access to the means necessary and suitable for personal development is the establishment of a just and equitable social and economic order. An unjust social and economic system promotes inequities and disparities, and children are often most victimized by such a system. Justice, equality of opportunity, non-discrimination in the treatment of children can only be insured when there is "liberty and justice for all."

Within a just and harmonious society, there should also be an effort to make certain that the special needs of children are met. Although the United States does not suffer from a shortage of food, many persons — especially children — suffer from poor nutrition. Housing facilities should be designed with children in mind, and with a view to the harmonious mixing of persons of all ages as well as of various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Some families need special assistance and adequate social services, rehabilitation programs, and physical and mental health facilities should be available in the best interests of children and families.

Perhaps most important for the child's development are educational and recreational facilities. Education includes parenthood training, early childhood education, schools and appropriate facilities for the development of special talents and abilities. Libraries, parks and recreational facilities, museums and cultural centers enable the child to learn and appreciate the accomplishments of his forebearers. Despite massive commitments of funds to education, many school systems are inadequate or ineffective, particularly in major cities. Moreover, the emphasis on obtaining a college degree has not resulted in a

population whose learning is truly proportionate to the amount of formal education available.

The educational system should be reexamined and its resources re-focused on enabling children to learn, to think, to make responsible decisions and judgments. Education should prepare children for life. Moreover, the public philosophy governing educational policy must recognize the fundamental right of children to religious education and moral training as an inherent part of their personal development. Denying financial aid to religious schools is not a necessary and logical conclusion of pluralism and religious freedom. Nor is the denial of practically all auxiliary services to children in religious schools compatible with a commitment to equality of opportunity for all.

Situations That Threaten the Child's Welfare

Unfortunately, enduring threats to the welfare of children exist in our nation. It is our intention here to focus on one specific area — child abuse — because it is symptomatic of other threats, and because the determined efforts of some dedicated people have led to considerable progress in overcoming the problem.

Conservative estimates indicate that about 700 children are killed each year by their parents or guardians. In 1974 there were 24,000 suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect in New York City alone, with more than 19,000 incidents reported — almost double the number for 1972. Yet there is no clear, universally acceptable definition of child abuse, and although it comes to light more now than in the past, we have no real basis for comparison.

The most common description of child abuse involves physically violent acts against a child that result in death or physical harm — cuts, bruises, burns, bites, broken bones, starvation and brain or internal injuries. Psychiatrists would also include certain types of emotional or psychological punishment or deprivation in the category of child abuse. The description can be broadened to include systematic deprivation or abusive attitudes directed toward a child, or a total environment that is hostile to child development.

For the most part, however, child abuse means specific activity by an adult toward a child that results in diagnosable physical or psychological harm to the child. Dr. Vincent J. Fontana of the New York Foundling Hospital's Center for Parent and Child Development, a nationally recognized expert in child abuse, notes that although there is a difference between abuse and neglect, the difference is very often negligible.

In his book *Somewhere a Child Is Crying*, Dr. Fontana provides considerable information on child abuse and describes some programs that can help abusing parents and their children. Dr. Fontana notes the following characteristics of child abuse beyond the actual injury. The child is often below three years of age, and the abuse is usually recurrent, though frequently not reported or discovered. The violence is

committed by one or both parents or someone whom they allow to abuse the child. The parents are frequently troubled people who need help themselves, who do not want to harm their children, who fear others and who often claim ignorance about the child's injuries. Dr. Fontana estimates that half of the battered children returned to the parents without any help will ultimately die of child abuse.

Only in the past 20 years has there been a systematic study of child abuse, its causes, and attempts to prevent it by treatment programs. Physicians began to find an increased incidence of young children with serious injuries, which led to searching for causes. Dr. Henry Kempe of Colorado described his findings to the medical profession and coined the term "the battered-child syndrome." Doctors DeFrancis, Fontana, Helfer, Stede and others have contributed to a better understanding of child abuse by their writings in the medical literature. Dr. David Gil correlated child abuse with studies of violence. And Senator Walter Mondale held congressional hearings and sponsored legislation to provide money to support treatment and prevention programs dealing with child abuse.

As a result, some new insights have been achieved. Abusing parents often were abused children; violence toward children is part of a person's overall inclination toward violence; most abuse does not begin as willful violence; many abusing parents want to stop their abusive activity.

Some social theorists claim that abused children are unwanted children, resulting from the unavailability of family planning and abortion. It is argued that by eliminating unwanted children, we will eliminate child abuse. As Dr. Fontana notes, this argument "might be a wonderfully real solution, if it were not so sweeping and simplistic, or if it were only valid . . . The assumption that every battered child is an unwanted child, or that most or even a large majority of abused children are unwanted children, is totally false." Other specialists agree with Dr. Fontana in rejecting the "unwanted child" argument, which distracts attention from the real causes and possibilities of correcting the increasing incidence of child abuse.

Perhaps one of the most important conclusions reached by those dealing with child abuse is that a common characteristic of abusing parents is very low self-esteem. These parents tend to project their feelings of inadequacy and self-hatred onto their children, but in fact they want their children to love and rely on them, as evidenced when supportive family services are made available to them.

It is this insight that is the key to the *Temporary Shelter* program at the New York Foundling Hospital's Center for Parent and Child Development. The program attempts to help parents cope with the child and the stresses and strains that lead to child abuse. Parents (mostly mothers) come to live at the Foundling Hospital along with their children for a period of four months. The staff of professionals and

para-professionals works with the mothers, teaching them "parenting" and helping them to know themselves better. Dr. Fontana says the children give the parents a sense of purpose in life, and the program tries to keep mothers and children together. Each mother is given her own "mother surrogate," a mature woman who has been successful as a mother. The assistant accompanies the mother in shopping, doing chores, and taking care of the child. By association and example the abusing mother learns how to be a successful mother herself.

The Foundling Hospital program has enjoyed reasonable success, and has been able to rehabilitate mothers and children and return them to the community, with no further child abuse or neglect occurring. Other instances of keeping mothers and children together have also proved encouraging.

Conclusion

The USCC statement on *Children: Their Value and Destiny*, provides an appropriate conclusion to this section:

"Parenthood is one of the most challenging and rewarding of all human relationships. Christian parents are called to a prophetic mission, to witness by their love and generosity to the primacy of life. The sacrifices parents make in bearing and raising children are a powerful testimony of their fidelity and their hopefulness.

"But even in the face of an uncertain future, most young couples still look positively and hopefully toward parenthood. They see each child as an individual person, capable of bringing new hope and happiness to the entire human family.

"This is the moment in history when all of society must affirm its belief in the worth and significance of children, and the contribution they make to the human family. In God's providence, a child is able to love, to relate personally with others, and to pursue his destiny, both temporal and eternal.

"It is to the good of society and of the family that the rights of children be respected and protected by law. Moreover, it is a matter of justice toward the child. Accordingly, we urge a careful look at our whole fabric of law to redress the inequities that deprive children of their rights, and to establish a legal system that gives every child his basic human rights and the opportunities to fulfill those rights in dignity and freedom."

Program Suggestions

Parents of Pre-Schoolers Program The Total Child

The Parents of Pre-Schoolers Program, developed by the Family Life Apostolate of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, has two phases:

- Phase I is the *Parents of Pre-Schoolers Program*, comprised of six conferences held at designated

parishes throughout the archdiocese. The conferences involve lectures by specialists in various areas of child development, followed by discussion. A program manual is available.

- Phase II, *The Total Child*, is a parish followup program that centers around small discussion groups involved in an exchange of ideas. The groups meet four times, discussing the topics outlined in the discussion manual, *The Total Child*. A leader's manual is available for group leaders.

The entire program is designed to be run monthly for ten months. It can be adapted to suit the needs of a parish, and *The Total Child* can be used over a shorter time span as a separate program. If so, it should be initiated by at least one lecture session, and amplified by directing the participants to selected readings.

Manuals and information available from: Family Life Apostolate, Archdiocese of New Orleans, 7887 Walmsley Ave., New Orleans, La. 70125.

Education for Parenthood

Education for Parenthood is a joint project of the Office of Education and the Office of Child Development, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare.

Exploring Childhood is a one-year elective course for teenage boys and girls — adaptable to the needs of adolescents of various cultural backgrounds. Students spend part of their time in the classroom learning about child development, the needs of children, and family relationships through especially prepared workbooks, films, and audio-cassettes. They then go to child care centers to work with young children under the supervision of their own teacher and a pre-school teacher. Parents of students and of the young children are involved in the program.

Because no single parenthood education course will fit every situation and needs vary from community to community and state to state, the Office of Education and the Office of Child Development can also provide information about other approaches that schools might use in developing their own program.

A report has been published describing a number of these programs, and a second booklet includes suggestions for planning an *Education For Parenthood* course. These booklets and additional illustrative materials are available for use by school systems wishing to initiate parenthood education programs or improve existing programs.

For more information, school systems, universities, and educational organizations should write to: W. Stanley Kruger, Education for Parenthood Project, Office of Education, Rm. 2181, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202. Non-educational organizations and the general public should write to: Sidney Rosendorf, Education and Parenthood Project, Division of Public Education, Office of Child Development, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Temporary Shelter Program

Temporary Shelter Program of the New York Foundling Hospital's Center for Parent and Child Development. This program is an innovative approach to the problem of child maltreatment combining psychiatric, medical and social services in the treatment of the mother (family whenever possible) and the child. It is the only comprehensive in- and out-patient abuse and neglect program in the United States. It opened in September 1972, with the following objectives:

- To prevent separation of parents and child whenever possible.
- To prevent the placement of children in institutions.
- To encourage the attainment of self-care status on the part of parents.
- To stimulate the attainment of self-sufficiency for the family unit.
- To prevent further abuse or neglect by removing children from families who show an unwillingness or inability to profit from the treatment program.

There are four components in the program:

- Multidisciplinary team approach — professionals and non-professionals.
- Engagement of the surrogate mothers or "lay therapists."
- "Hotline" or "Lifeline" service for crisis situations.
- In-resident facility for mother and child.

The multidisciplinary team approach provides comprehensive medical, psychiatric and social services to both parents and children. The professional staff, the housemothers and the para-professionals (social work assistants) coordinate their skills and expertise in providing treatment, rehabilitation, and preventive measures through actual demonstration of how to "mother" while "being mothered" at the same time.

The para-professionals who live in the community where the patients come from serve as the surrogate mothers to the patients. This helps the patients to experience maternal interest and concern while learning mothering skills.

An integral element of the "surrogate mother" service, *Hotline*, is provided between the patients and the surrogate mothers, so that someone is available to them via telephone or a home visit when the patients need someone to talk to, to ventilate their feelings, someone to listen to them. (So, instead of projecting onto their children and taking it out on them in the form of abuse, they have the "surrogate mothers" to turn to.)

On a wider scale is a hotline at the agency manned by treatment personnel on a 24-hour basis. Anybody can call directly or in behalf of a parent, and these calls are carefully monitored in order to provide

instant service, which may be referral to another type of facility, or an intake interview for admission of the parent and child to the program as an out-patient or in-patient.

Both the in-patient component and the out-patient are located on the fifth floor of the New York Foundling Hospital. The patients for the in-house facility are chosen on a very selective basis so as to avoid uprooting or breaking up a family unit for placement. Mothers with two or three children are able to enter the resident program. The child who has been abused remains with the mother, but provisions are made for the other children placed in the nursery to interact with them and receive appropriate services. In rare cases where a father is involved, although he doesn't enter the resident facility, he receives services as well.

Individual, group and family therapy by psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric social workers, chemotherapy by psychiatrists, a broad range of pediatric medical and social services including nursery and day care, lay therapy by para-professionals who act as surrogate mothers, provision of concrete services where needed, and child care education for the mothers are all essential and integral components of the program.

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Films

Hello Up There, 8 min., color, animation. Out of the mouths of babes — comments on how they see the world. Most comments focus on parent/child communication. Good for parents and teachers to show how children see them. Mass Media Ministries, 2116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218. Tel. 301/727-3270. Rent: \$15; Purchase: \$135.

Nobody Important, 11 min., color. A young boy, disturbed by the lack of communication, consideration and warmth in his parents' relationships with each other and with him, wanders away, feeling he is "nobody important." Film shows the need of young children for parental love and support. Teleketics, Franciscan Communications Center, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90015. Rental: \$15; Purchase: \$150.

Parenthood: Training Before Trouble, 20 min., color, 16 mm or 8 mm cassette. Dramatization of day-to-day conflicts between parents and children that creates an awareness for the need for better understanding and communication between parents and their children. Produced in consultation with Dr. Thomas Gordon, creator of P.E.T. — Parent Effectiveness Training. Available from: Teckla Productions, 3518 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Los Angeles, CA 90068. Tel: 213/851-7700. Rental: \$50; Purchase: \$285.

The Escape, 14 min., b/w, 16 mm. A young boy, neglected by parents, neighbors and peers, spends much time alone in self-improvised forms of escape. Ultimately he runs into the path of an oncoming car — his final escape. Portrayed against similar scenes of "what might have been." Available from: Mass Media Ministries. Rental: \$15; Purchase: \$135.

Women

Equality can only be found in its essential foundation, which is the dignity of the human person, man and woman, in their filial relationship with God, of whom they are the visible image.

Pope Paul VI, Address to the General Secretary of
the International Women's Year Conference

International Situation

There are many differences in the status of women throughout the world, differences that depend on economic and social structure, family life and culture. But basic similarities do exist. Women today have in common not only concerns about families and children; they also share a growing number of challenges and activities as they adapt to social change. However, even though social conditions continue to change, the overall status of women in most nations of the world today is still inferior to that of men.

Although international standards for legal equality between the sexes can be found in the *UN Declaration on Human Rights* and the *UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, in most countries women do not enjoy equality with men. Many women do not have access to higher education, while some have no education at all. Of the world's 700 million illiterates, the majority are women. Hopefully, the UN Conference on Women, held in Mexico City last June will give incentive to people of all nations to work increasingly for the elimination of those practices and customs that discriminate against women, and will motivate women to avail themselves of opportunities for development.

At the same time, efforts to provide services and opportunities that women need to better their lives day by day cannot be neglected in favor of pursuing "equality" as an abstract ideal. Changes in the social structure must respond to specific needs and concerns of women and their families.

The Women's Movement in the USA

In the United States the effort to achieve legal equality for women is being made as the pros and cons of

amending the Constitution are debated in legislatures, homes, classrooms and the media. Unlike the women's movement of the early 1900's, which was primarily concerned with the legal right of women to vote, the movement of the '70's is concerned with a broader range of issues. Today the effort centers on eliminating discrimination from the various structures of society — law, social practices and customs, attitudes and expectations.

The focus on women has had a decided impact on almost every aspect of American life, and much of its impact has been positive. It has highlighted attitudes and practices that discriminate against women, and has made women themselves more aware of their own responsibility for making equality a reality. The high visibility of women taking on new roles in business, politics and the professions has given all women an unprecedented self-confidence in themselves and in their own abilities.

Other women, as well as some men, have been turned off by what they regard as the extremes of the women's movement. Some fear that the effort to restore equality between the sexes will become a source of divisiveness, destroying the equality that already exists. And many others are just not certain how they feel about the whole thing. To be sure, the women's movement, like all movements, has its fringe elements. But in working through the myriad issues involved, we cannot allow the extremes to provide us with an excuse for ignoring the heart of the matter — the existence of a definite and often subtle discrimination against one half of the human population.

Education

One of the prerequisites for a happy and fruitful life,

especially in our complex society, is an education commensurate with one's abilities and talents. Educational equality is not yet a reality, but progress is being made.

Article 9 of the *UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* states: "All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to girls and women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in education in all levels." The article specifically mentions, among other things, that women should have access to all types of educational institutions, should enjoy qualified teaching staffs, and should have equal opportunities for scholarships and other financial aid.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 holds that sex discrimination shall be eliminated from every federally financed educational program. This Title has implications for a broad spectrum of educational issues, including admissions and recruiting, athletics, scholarships, textbooks, curriculum, and women's studies programs, to mention just a few.

At the elementary level, schools are beginning to use texts and other materials that point to the diversity of roles available to men and women. And many men and women from all walks of life are invited to speak to classes of youngsters, so that children become accustomed to seeing adults of both sexes pursuing a variety of careers.

Although higher education has become increasingly available to women in the United States, it has generally steered young women into "helper" roles. Women were expected to be secretaries, not executives; nurses, not doctors, etc. There have always been expectations to the "rule," and many talented women have become professionally successful. But too often schools, backed by parents and society, conveyed to women the idea that there was no need to excel. Unfortunately, even today, guidance counselors urge girls to "take up typing in case you ever need a job."

Today increasing numbers of women are marrying later, and many are remaining single permanently. Most will ultimately marry and have families, but many of these women, either from choice or necessity, will be part of the labor force for perhaps as long as 35 years. In line with the lifestyles they are choosing, young women need an education that will prepare them for their roles as wives and mothers as well as workers outside the home. Young women need to be encouraged to develop their special interests and abilities, but more importantly, parents and teachers should communicate to young people a sense of excitement and enthusiasm about the potential of each and every person. Like young men, women should be encouraged to think in terms of life-long plans, i.e., what they want to be doing 10 years from now, 25 years from now, and so on.

Women Who Work

The working woman is not a new phenomenon.

Through the ages woman has worked alongside of and as hard as man. What is new, and increasingly accepted, is that a woman works outside the home setting during much of her married life. No matter how they feel about the women's liberation movement, most people pretty well accept the fact that the issues of equal employment opportunity and equal pay for equal work are matters of human justice.

According to a 1967 report by the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of years women work varies with marital status and presence of children:

Marital Status	Years Worked
Single & childless	45 years
Married & childless	35 years
Married with 1 child	25 years
Married with 2 children	22 years
Married with 3 children	20 years
Married with 4 children	17 years

In a recent survey by the Institute of Life Insurance, the following statistics are pertinent:

- Between 1940 and 1973, women in the labor force increased by 68%; the rate for married women tripled.
- In 1973, one-third of the women with pre-school children were working outside the home. Between 1960 and 1973, the number of working women with children under three years doubled.
- Most women work because of economic need. Almost two-thirds of working women were single, divorced, separated, or had a husband making less than \$7,000 a year.
- The earnings of women substantially help the income of the family. In 1972, wives who worked full time contributed nearly 40% of their family's total income.
- Women's incomes in all occupations are significantly lower than men's.

The problem is not whether women should work, but how those who want to, or need to, can do so without leaving other important obligations unmet. A husband of a working woman can make the necessary difference, not only by being pleased about his wife's involvement in the outside world, but by ungrudgingly taking responsibility for part of the day-to-day tasks of running a home, and helping to take care of the children.

Some companies are reluctant to hire young women. They feel "there's no use training even bright young women because they'll marry, have children and leave." This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy if women have no choice but to leave work to care for children on a fulltime basis. As well as husbands helping with children and housework, creative child care centers, nursery schools, and flexible working

schedules for parents can provide partial solutions to this problem.

More and more, positions of leadership are becoming open to women. However, firms often say: "The job's open to any woman who's qualified, but we haven't found one." In many cases, they probably haven't looked, but women themselves must look to the future and pursue the quality of education needed to obtain and advance in leadership positions. At the same time, the myth that women workers are characterized by a high turnover and absenteeism, and thus poor employment risks, must be put to rest. According to a recent government report, men and women at the same job level had similar attendance records.

The Woman Who Marries

A recent survey of young people shows that most young men and women have positive attitudes toward marriage. The survey also shows that fewer young women today prefer a life as housewife, while more young women indicated that they would like to combine marriage and a career. The trend is very definitely toward partnership in marriage. A 1974 Roper poll showed that 60% of the women under 30 who were surveyed preferred marriages in which both husband and wife work and share the responsibilities of housework and child-rearing.

In talking of women's liberation, we must be careful of the mentality that says, "If you're going to be a totally fulfilled woman, you must be integrated into the process of production." Many women choose to devote their full time to being wives, mothers, and homemakers. They love their husbands and their children, are happy with the lifestyle they have chosen, and would have it no other way. They experience deep satisfaction spending time with their children, and take on an important educative role, especially in the pre-school years. Many women who choose this lifestyle are, by their very presence, unique sources of unity to their families. Too often, though, the demands of everyday life are such that many women fail to recognize the vital contribution they make to their families.

Increasingly, however, a young woman marries, leaves work to have her first child, and then often finds herself isolated in a small apartment with too little to keep her mentally and physically occupied. The demands and challenges of school and working days are no longer there, and old friendships have been disrupted. Again, as is so common in our mobile society, family and close friends might be thousands of miles away. At this point some young women, with the encouragement and support of their husbands and children, return to school to finish work for degrees, or to further their education in some other way. Others return to work either full- or part-time, while yet others become actively engaged in community projects that, although staffed by volunteers, are of indispensable benefit to many people.

Whatever their lifestyles, women who are wives and mothers need encouragement and support from both society and the Church. Often in the pursuit of "women's liberation," marriage and family tend to be downgraded, and children are depicted as obstacles to self-fulfillment.

This becomes most obvious in the abortion issue. Unfortunately, abortion has become for many part and parcel of the women's liberation movement. Many women contend that abortion is a right to which they are entitled if they are to have control over their own bodies. At the same time women are pointing out that they can bring a new and much needed dimension to social problems by reason of their unique sensitivity, their capacity to nurture and respond to others with compassion, and most especially their reverence and openness to all of life. Yet, to accept the destruction of their unborn children is to negate these very qualities, and to succumb to a new type of domination that denies them one of their most unique capabilities — motherhood. Too many women refuse to see that the mindset that promotes abortion as the quick and easy solution is in reality the mindset of exploitation that the women's movement set out to destroy. At any rate, rights and freedoms must be weighed in relation to the rights and freedoms of others. Freedom for women to develop their potential cannot be won at the expense of other persons, especially children.

The Single Woman

The single woman lives in a world that revolves around the family — the nuclear family. Because there is an unspoken expectation that every woman should be attached to a man, some people see the single woman as slightly less than whole, while some parents fear their daughter's singleness might have been caused by a child-rearing failure on their part.

However, today many women are discovering that it's okay to be single, and some are finding that it's not just okay, but is the best way of life for them. Being single, like being anything else, has its drawbacks, but it is for many a rewarding and fulfilling way of life.

- Single women have a unique opportunity for personal growth and for attaining the tremendous feeling of confidence that comes from being self-reliant and on one's own.
- The single woman has the freedom to pursue friendships with a variety of people, male and female, married and single.
- She has the privacy to relax, listen to music, or get lost in a good book.
- She has the freedom to spend time doing what she likes to do, including work. Because she has the time, she often brings to her work a deep sense of commitment and dedication.
- Single women retain a deep commitment to and an ongoing relationship with other members of their

own families — parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, as well as nieces and nephews.

The widowed, separated or divorced woman has many of the same opportunities and advantages as the woman who does not marry. She also has unique challenges to meet, as she adjusts to making decisions on her own, perhaps for the first time in her life, and as she raises a family without a mate. Society and the church can provide strength and support for women who are widowed, separated or divorced, by affirming the validity of their efforts, by making them welcome in community and parish activities, and by providing forums where they can discuss the special joys and problems they encounter in their lives. Such support will help the widowed, separated or divorced person acquire the necessary self-confidence to be active and productive members of the community.

Religious Women

Until recent years, many people had little contact with religious women, except in their capacity as teachers in local parish schools. For the average lay person, more myths surrounded nuns than can be found in a book of fairy tales. Today, however, religious women are quickly dispelling old images. They are more and more being recognized for what they are — professional women, dedicated to reconciling men and women with one another and with God.

In their capacity as single, professional women, nuns can uniquely demonstrate that women are persons in themselves, since their own femininity can be seen and understood apart from their special relationship to men and children. Increasingly, religious women are becoming more involved in social and pastoral ministries hitherto restricted to men. They are also becoming more visible and more intimately involved in their local communities, from ministering to those individuals in need of help, organizing professional associations for their sisters, and attempting to bring about important changes in the political structures of our nation.

The Church and Women

If, over the centuries, women had played a major role in formulating Christian doctrine and practices, Christianity would probably have had a different attitude toward women. But the context within which the church's teaching was formulated was that of a patriarchal society. Thus, most of the teaching on women's roles was determined by men, frequently without benefit of feminine insight and experience.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the church's teaching in regard to women has undergone dramatic change. It will continue to evolve as the issues continue to be discussed and re-thought by all members of the church. The church itself, aware that practices and attitudes have not kept pace with current thinking, has set up commissions, at the Vatican as well as on

national and diocesan levels, to work toward a renewal of the whole concept of the person and the mission of women in the Church and in society. In recent years many within the hierarchy of the church, including popes, synods and individual bishops, have spoken to the issue, but Bishop Carroll Dozier of Memphis, Tennessee, perhaps most clearly expressed this new attitude in a recent pastoral letter:

Immeasurable potential may be lost to the Church and to society by too rigidly exclusive male and female roles. The traditionally opposite yet complementary trends of protector (male) and nurturer (female) must be reconciled if mankind is to realize its identity as the image of God . . . The dignity and rights of women — and equally the dignity and rights of men — depend on an open-ended exploration of the untapped potential in all persons, and the true freedom for each to grow into the unique spiritual being he or she is capable of becoming.

Despite human failings, especially in regard to the unequal status of women and men, the Catholic Church has succeeded where others have failed in humanizing and civilizing the deepest impulses of ordinary people. These achievements were due in no small part to the church's teaching about Mary. Mary was to a rough and barbaric people, and is to us today, the epitome of all that is womanly. She is for us the Mother of God, and our spiritual mother in whom we find love, warmth, compassion and approachability. We should not lose sight of the fact that women have been the mainstay of the church, both as its members and as transmitters of the faith to generations of children. Increasingly, women will continue, jointly with men, to pass on the faith to children, as they also assume a more prominent role in the decision-making processes within the church.

Conclusion

The needs and concerns of women in regard to their status and roles within society often do not easily lend themselves to concrete verbal descriptions. However, as women become more articulate in expressing their ideas in the public forum, the following priorities will undoubtedly receive greater public attention:

- Women, as a matter of human justice, must be recognized by themselves and others, as full human persons — persons who need not prove their strength or equality by competition, nor be totally dependent on others for a sense of identity.
- Women are seeking a new image that respects, not *sameness* with men, but a fundamental equality of talent, of mental ability, and strength of character in men and women alike.
- Women and men must come to see that women's lives, emotions and aims are equally as important and significant as men's.
- We must apply to the solution of concrete problems of daily life those qualities and concerns that

women can provide — her openness and reverence for life itself, her vulnerability, her capacity to nurture and respond to others with compassion, the richness of her intelligence, her joy and spontaneity.

- Women must be aware of their worth and dignity in their current roles, for out of such awareness will come a fuller recognition of their rights.
- Women must create and take advantage of opportunities to participate fully in all of life — in society, in the family, in the church.

Program Suggestions

Set up a 5-week program for all women of the parish to be held on successive Sunday afternoons or evenings. The programs should be well publicized by posters, local newspapers, radio & TV. For “advertising” in church, arrange an exhibition in the back of the church showing “Women through the Ages,” and hand out descriptive fliers to all women, from high school age on. The program should make use of well-qualified speakers, as well as allow ample time for participant discussion.

First Week: Give an overview of the impact of the women’s movement on all aspects of American life. A good speaker would be a professor from a local college who teaches a course on “women”, or a local woman actively involved in the movement.

Second Week: Have a sociologist or psychologist speak about the socialization processes that help determine a person’s expectations of him or herself, and expectations of others.

Third Week: Have a local educator, or an employment counsellor, discuss lifestyles for women that might include women returning to work, volunteer commitment, or continuing education. Encouragement and practical information should be provided: how to face interviews, preparing applications for jobs and schools, etc.

Fourth Week: Have a theologian or church historian discuss the teaching of the different churches in regard to women.

Fifth Week: Have a successful minority woman, whether minority because of race, age, or social status, discuss the special obstacles that are met by women of minority groups.

Women and Liturgy

Although women are becoming more active in liturgical celebrations, many people are not aware of the existing possibilities for the active participation of women in the liturgy: readings, prayer of the faithful, etc. Make such possibilities known to parishoners by printing the information in the Sunday bulletin, and by asking more women of the parish to volunteer their services for liturgical celebrations.

Women and the Church

Many people, men and women alike, are unfamiliar with the church’s recent statements concerning women. As a high school class project:

- have students research recent documents, including Council documents, statements of John XXIII and Paul VI, Synod documents, recent encyclicals, and statements of individual bishops, pulling out those which explicitly or implicitly speak of the equality of the sexes.
- give each class member copies of the pertinent texts, and provide opportunity for class discussion.

Information Bank

Many women who do not wish to take a job outside the home, would like to volunteer some time to a worthwhile community project. But identifying those organizations that need help, and determining where her talents can best be used, can be difficult. Have a committee canvass the area to find out which agencies rely on volunteer help, noting:

- what type of activity the agency is involved in.
- what kind of help they most need — someone to work with patients; drivers; someone to work with young people, etc.
- full address, phone numbers (working hours & weekends), as well as the name of the person to contact.

This information can be inexpensively duplicated and made available in the back of church, or included in a mailing to all parishioners. A system to touch base regularly with the various agencies would keep information current. This could also be a worthwhile class project for high school students.

A Parish Experience

Have young children of the parish draw posters depicting their ideas of what women are, and display all finished posters in the church. On a Sunday evening, after parents and other parishioners have had a chance to see the posters, invite a guest speaker to discuss the changing roles and status of women. The program might well start with a brief film such as “To Be A Woman,” and be followed by coffee in the church hall, where the discussion can be continued in an informal way.

Bibliography and Resources

Books

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Janeway, Elizabeth, *Man's World, Woman's Place*, 1971, N.Y., Dell Pub. Co., paper, \$2.95. Explores the significant myths relating to women's roles in society, and analyzes the myth of female power.

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Maccoby, Eleanor E. and Carol N. Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences*, 1974, Stanford, Calif., Stanford Univ. Press, 634 pp., \$18.95 (hardback only). A summary of research on sex differences, and an exhaustive cross-referenced bibliography.

Papal Teachings: The Woman in the Modern World, ed. Monks of Solesmes, 1959, Boston.

Rossi, Alice (ed.), *The Feminist Papers*, 1974, N.Y., Bantam Books, Inc. 716 pp., \$1.95. An anthology of major feminist writings from the late eighteenth century to the mid-twenties.

Tavard, George H., *Woman in Christian Tradition*, 1973, Notre Dame, Ind., Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 257 pp., \$3.95. An impressive discussion of the image of woman in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Pamphlets/Statements

International Women's Year 1975: Study Kit, Vatican Committee on Women in Society and in the Church. Information, suggestions and background for churches to use in participating in IWY. USCC Publications, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Cost: \$1.25 Quantity rates available.

Equal Rights for Women — A Call for Action. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 1967 includes background information for each of the *Declaration's* articles. Available from: United Nations, U.N. Plaza, New York 10017.

Marialis Cultis, Pope Paul VI, Feb. 2, 1974, on devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Available from: Publications Office, USCC, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Cost: 65¢.

"New Feminine Identity," in *New Catholic World*, May/June 1975. Entire issue devoted to new feminine identity in the Church. Includes a step-by-step adult education

program that can be used in conjunction with the articles contained in this issue. Available from: New Catholic World, 400 Sette Dr., Paramus, N.J. 07652, 95¢ + postage & handling.

Statements concerning the role and status of women, by Pope Paul VI, Bishops Maher and Dozier, as well as other church documents, is available from: Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Cost: 75¢.

Resource Agencies

Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Role and Status of Women in Society & in the Church, NCCB
1312 Mass. Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

National Council of Catholic Women
1330 Mass. Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

U.S. Center for International Women's Year
1630 Cresent Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

U.N. Commission on the Status of Women,
United Nations Plaza, New York 10017

Audio-Visuals

To Be A Woman, 13½ min., color. Young women speak out on various aspects of womanhood, and what it means to them. A good discussion-starter, especially among young women. Mass Media Ministries, 2116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218. Rental: \$17.50; Purchase: \$175.

Included Out, 2 min., color, animation. Deals cleverly with the status of women in the church, particularly discriminatory language. Excellent discussion starter. Mass Media Ministries. Rental: \$7.50; Purchase: \$60.

The Fan, 3 min., color, animation. Good for discussion of self-confidence and individual potential for growth. Senior high/adult level. Mass Media Ministries. Rental: \$7.50; Purchase \$75.

American Woman's Search for Equality, color filmstrip with cassette. Explores the confusion and debate over what women's liberation really is. Mass Media Ministries, #802. Cost: \$22.

Woman: A Multimedia Resource for Human Liberation. A flexible program for the development of women as persons. Includes structures and adaptations, essays, cassettes, filmstrips, etc. Teleketics, Franciscan Communications Center, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, CA 90015. Purchase: \$95.

The Aging

What you have not saved in your youth how will you acquire in your old age? How becoming to the gray-haired is judgment; and a knowledge of counsel to those on in years! How becoming to the aged is wisdom; understanding and prudence to the venerable. The crown of old men is wide experience; their glory, the fear of the Lord.

Sirach 25:3-6

Who Is the Older American?

One of every 10 persons in the United States is now an “older American,” aged 65 or over. The proportion of older Americans has been steadily growing in recent decades. In light of the decreasing birth rate, their number will continue to grow and they will be a proportionately larger part of the overall population in years to come. Between 1900 and 1970, the total population of the United States tripled, while the older group grew almost sevenfold.

The imaginary picture of an “older person” is that of someone far advanced in age, weak and unsteady on his or her feet, chronically ill, with a poor memory, little or no knowledge of what is happening, and unable to understand the modern world. Also part of the image are financial dependency, immobility, and general inability to cope with day-to-day problems.

This imaginary picture is not very pleasant. In fact, since everyone is constantly getting older, it is frightening to many middle-aged Americans. It is a picture that is generally hidden or kept in the dark recesses of one’s mind. It is a disheartening picture. But it is not true. Perhaps the most tragic result of this false, imaginary picture, is that it often forestalls effective efforts to find meaningful roles for older Americans in the overall society, besides preventing society from meeting the real problems faced by older Americans.

A first order of business, then, is to reconstruct the public image of the older American, and then to move toward some positive action recommendations. An accurate picture of older Americans includes the following facts:

- Most older Americans (62%) are under age 75, and a third are between 65 and 70.
- More than 80% are in stable health. Though only 14% have no chronic conditions or impairments of any kind, the vast majority are able to take care of their health problems pretty much by themselves.
- Seven out of 10 live in family settings; only one in 20 lives in an institution. Significant numbers live alone or with non-relatives.
- The majority (64%) of older Americans live in metropolitan areas, and most live in the central cities of such areas.
- Older Americans have less than half the income of the general population. Slightly under 20% of older men are steadily employed, generally in low-paying or part-time jobs.
- Older Americans spend proportionately more of their income on the necessities of life — food, shelter, health care. Ownership of automobiles and appliances is lower for older Americans, largely because of their cost.
- Inflation takes a greater toll on those with a fixed income — and elderly persons generally fall in this category. Rising prices and other increases in the cost of living cannot be met, and a low-income budget leaves little room for readjustment.
- Although a quarter of the entire older population lives in New York, Pennsylvania or California, growing numbers are moving to Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, New Mexico and Florida.

On balance, then, older Americans are a fairly stable part of the population. They enjoy basic independence and reasonably good health. They lead orderly lives. But their position is precarious because changes in social and economic patterns can easily disrupt their orderly routines.

Needs of the Aging

Unquestionably, the economic problems of older Americans are among the most pressing, especially in a time of inflation and recession. A fixed income cannot keep pace with escalating costs, and older Americans generally have no way to supplement their income. Although material affluence cannot determine the value of a person, a financial structure in which income is related to the cost of living is a priority of justice in any society. In order to insure the possibility of such economic stability for older Americans, the following seem necessary:

- An adjustment of social security payments to keep pace with inflation. Most older Americans derive at least one-third of their incomes from social security.
- Establishment and upgrading of pension programs to insure another source of old-age income.
- Changes in social security regulations to allow older Americans to earn more money without loss of social security benefits.
- Increased employment opportunities for older persons, both in specialized areas and at reduced time schedules.

Housing is a problem for older Americans. Many retain ownership of homes that are more than sufficient for their needs, in need of repair, and too costly to maintain, precisely because no other type of housing is available. Senior citizens' housing must be carefully planned and coordinated with other housing development. The availability of stores, churches, and recreational facilities should be part of the planning.

Although many older Americans do fairly well in maintaining good health, they suffer the same difficulties as everyone else from the inadequacies of our health care system. Preventive health care and frequent check-ups are especially helpful. They should be provided without excessive cost and in dignified circumstances.

The rising cost of food is perhaps the most serious problem for older Americans. Many are on restricted diets or find it especially difficult to plan nutritious and economical meals. Food stamps, meals on wheels and other programs can help. They should be made more available to older Americans.

Recommendations for social programs and social services similar to the above can be expanded rather easily. In fact, many older Americans are now mobilizing their own efforts to put pressure on government to bring about necessary changes. Not long ago,

more than 3,000 elderly persons from across the nation met in Washington, D.C., to sensitize Congress to their needs. The meeting included the usual lectures and group sessions, but it also involved visits to legislators and some picketing of government agencies. A display of "grey power" may be useful.

Perhaps more important than political action is the need to create general awareness of older Americans and their problems, and to generate the more widespread sense of solidarity between other age groups and the aging. The aging are not simply engaged in a struggle for political power, but in a struggle for recognition and acceptance in the minds, hearts and general worldview of the young and middle-aged groups.

Respect for life knows no age barriers, and family living profits immensely from a mixture of age groups. Family specialists emphasize the need for children to be in contact with older persons, since both profit from the interchange. Young children can learn from older persons, and can often be stirred out of their self-centeredness. And young and middle-aged parents profit greatly from some outside reassurance or voluntary assistance. Older Americans, most of whom have had successful married lives, derive a new feeling of self-worth from being taken seriously by younger generations — even if they do not always agree totally.

Program Suggestions

The Church has a role to play as an institution with the capabilities to meet certain needs of the aging, and to bring them together with other groups or individuals in the community. The following program, developed in the diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, is a good example of what can be done.

Not By Bread Alone

"Harvest House" is an attempt to help older adults come to accept themselves as citizens who have a dignity to preserve, a stake in the present run of things, and a good many years to celebrate and enjoy life.

Harvest House was organized to give the older generation not only hope and vision for their future, but also actual, present-day dynamic challenges. Now in its second year of operation, Harvest House is a movement of the aging, by the aging and for the aging, seeking in a wholesome cooperative way what is necessary not only for the bodily health of older adults, but also for their spiritual and psychological well-being. Harvest House is convinced that a person can continue the process of learning and developing, thereby enjoying life in a personal and social manner. When one's working years come to an end, a whole new phase begins — a time for harvesting; a time for exploring hidden talents; a time to use leisure hours in exciting ways.

In the fall of 1973 Harvest House began to implement its theory of "continuing human development" by opening small neighborhood centers, preferably

near a church where facilities are offered free of charge. To date in the city of South Bend there are six such centers, where older adults can meet as often as they like to organize their talents, abilities and political power. These sites are connected with churches because the church is for many older people the normal place for gathering. Furthermore, churches generally have empty rooms available during the middle of the week and in the middle of the day. There is also a need to develop among the clergy a specialized ministry to the aging. Church leaders devote much of their time to the youth, which is understandable if the church is to have future members who will continue the assembly of God for the years to come. But the aging have special needs that also need attention, and a new pastoral interest needs to be generated on their behalf. Thus the clergyman's free time can be profitably utilized during the daytime hours when the young people are in school and other adults are busy making a living.

What are these Harvest House centers like? First of all, there is a six-point program that guides the program's overall philosophy:

- social awareness
- self-help and service to the community
- religious experience
- educational and cultural advancement
- recreation and celebration
- political power

Many older adults have a wealth of leadership qualities that quickly come to the fore when opportunity and challenge present themselves. Thus, each center prides itself on self-government, and an elected task force actively coordinates and implements the six points that are vital to the center's success.

Social Awareness

Each neighborhood center is meant to serve the older generation — approximately age 60 and over — regardless of religious persuasion, race or nationality. The center collects \$2.00 a year in dues from members but Harvest House is open to anyone in the area who is in need of friendship or sociability, whether or not they are dues-paying members.

Service

A center encourages its members to reach out to one another, as well as to others who are in need of help or companionship. There are many people confined to their homes, in hospitals and nursing homes, and still others are destitute either financially or psychologically — all such persons become the concern of the Harvest House membership.

Religious Experience

Retired persons have time to enjoy new approaches

to spiritual development. Communal anointing, creative retreats and spiritual study days, combined with travel and sociability, can become memorable and meaningful religious experiences. Small prayer groups can be fostered for Bible study, community awareness and personal growth. Counseling for the aging needs special attention, as does the need to educate older adults on a positive approach to illness and death.

Education

Harvest House is convinced that education is a never-ending process, and that the possibilities for continuing education are limitless as well as productive, regardless of one's age. In line with this conviction, Harvest House established the innovative "Forever Learning Institute." The Institute is an adult education program for adults 55 and over, which offers courses in the humanities, literature, music, fine arts, languages, personality growth, creative writing, nature study, national and world affairs, history, theology, etc. The Institute also offers activities such as special lectures, films, tours, concerts, discussions and workshops. Without the pressure of exams and competition, teachers and students mingle freely — a liberating experience for both. Harvest House firmly believes that this unique type of adult education center is a beautiful way of bringing older persons together to a new interest in life and learning, and to a greater degree of sociability and self-awareness as vital members of society.

Recreation and Celebration

This aspect of the program is both constructive and challenging. Harvest House assures its members that joy and fun are a wholesome part of life, and encourages them to be creative in planning activities that correspond with their dignity, their wisdom and their experience. Birthdays and anniversaries can be celebrated in different ways; group theater parties and trips can be arranged economically. Interesting lectures can be arranged on social security, financial matters, police protection, culinary arts, crafts, etc., and such things can be done in an atmosphere of sociability and friendship. Each center is responsible for its own programming.

Political Power

As noted above, 10% of the United States' population is over 65, and older adults are a fast-growing minority in our country. They are capable of procuring by means of their vote not only adequate care and attention from government agencies for themselves but for others who may be in need. Older people can prove their strength by numbers and show their concern for political matters, nationally as well as internationally. Hopefully, their wisdom and experience will be felt at the voting booths and in the legislative chambers of city, state and country.

Harvest House feels it is needed, and that the movement on behalf of the aging should be felt everywhere. The organization is not a complicated one, but well adapted to the strength and wisdom of the older generation. Many among their ranks are men and women from professional backgrounds, from long business and teaching careers; most, as homemakers and parents, have a priceless experience to offer; and still others have long been active in organizations and community affairs. Certainly these talents and skills must be recognized and respected. Such persons can enrich their own lives tremendously, while being of service to those less fortunate than themselves. Harvest House merely went ahead and provided encouragement and a place to meet and set before the aging one more beautiful chapter in their lives.

For further information write: Rev. Louis J. Putz, CSC, Harvest House, 120 E. Taylor, South Bend, Ind. 46601.

Bibliography and Resource Material

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Administration on Aging, DHEW, *Let's End Isolation*, Washington, D.C., 1973. No. 1762-00041. 75¢. Write: Public Documents Dept. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (must prepay).

Aging in America, Bert Kruger Smith, Boston. Beacon Press, 1973. \$3.95. Useful guide to the problems of the aging. Evaluates a variety of government and private efforts to serve the elderly which can be duplicated at the local level.

Growing Old and How to Cope With It, Alfons Deeken, 1972, Paramus, N.J., Paulist Press, \$1.45. The best chapters are concerned with spiritual growth in old age.

Growing Old, Sr. Marie Gaffney, M.S.B.T., 1972, Chicago: Claretian Publications, 40 pp. 75¢. An aid to the parish becoming the focal point for the elderly both for worship and for social life through organizations and meetings.

Handbook for the Elderly: How to Make the Parish Meaningful, Diocesan Pastoral Council, 144 W. Wood St., Youngstown, Ohio 44503, 1972, 25 pp., \$2.50

(booklet/manual). A parish response to the needs of the elderly.

Mooney, C., *Man Without Tears*, N.Y., Harper & Row, 1975. Cf. chapter on "old Age."

Religious Search, Growth and Enrichment for Older Adults, CCD-Religious Education Office, 222 N. 17th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103. Cost: \$3.00.

The Spanish Speaking Elderly, from 1971 White House Conference on Aging. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. Cost: \$6.75 for both volumes (Stock #1762-00065).

Films

I Think They Call Him John, b/w, 26 min. Poignant film that dramatically presents the loneliness and isolation in the life of an old man. Mass Media Ministries, 2116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218. Rental: \$17.50; Purchase: \$175.

Weekend, 12 min., color. Mother, father and son take grandfather to the country for a picnic. As the story evolves, you realize grandfather is not going home with them — he's being put out to pasture. As the family's car pulls away, you see other families also leaving — leaving their old behind. Excellent for discussion on how our society treats the elderly. High school/adult level. Mass Media Ministries. Rental: \$15; Purchase: \$150.

Of Time, Work and Leisure, 30 min. b&w. Based on the book of Sebastian de Grazia. Mass Media Associates. Rental, \$11.85.

The Four Day Week, 26 min. color. One episode of the CBS series "The 21st Century" narrated by Walter Cronkite. McGraw Hill Films, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York 10020. Purchase, \$375; rental, \$20 a day.

Resource Organizations

National Council on the Aging, 1828 L St., N.W., Suite 504, Washington, D.C. 20036

Administration on Aging, 400 6th St., S.W., Rm. 3548 Washington, D.C. 20201

National Center for Voluntary Action, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

National Council of Senior Citizens, 1511 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Death and Dying

Man is only a reed, the feeblest thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary for the entire universe to take up arms in order to crush him; a vapor, a drop of water is sufficient to kill him. But if the universe crushed him, man would still be nobler than the thing which destroys him, because he knows that he is dying: and the universe which has him at its mercy is unaware of it.

Pascal, *Pensees*

Rediscovering Death

Americans have rediscovered death. At least it would appear so from the steady flow of books and articles on the subject, and from the increase in lectures, workshops, and courses on death from coast to coast. Dr. Kübler-Ross, author of *On Death and Dying*, has become almost a household name. Even Marcus Welby, M.D., anguishes about euthanasia before millions of TV viewers.

It was not always so. Not very long ago the subject of death was taboo. Arnold Toynbee has observed that death was considered "un-American" in the United States, that is, it was thought to be a subversive challenge to the American obsession with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as well as a threat to the American cult of health and eternal youth. Only a few years ago Geoffrey Gorer popularized the expression "The Pornography of Death." He made a strong case for the idea that death had replaced sex as the great unmentionable in society. "Never say 'Die'" had come to be taken literally in our culture.

But this has changed greatly in recent years. Several reasons can be given to explain the current interest in death.

New Medical Technology. It is difficult for many, particularly young people, to fully appreciate the truly revolutionary nature of the new medical technology. Electronic devices (pacemakers and monitoring devices), respirators, antibiotics, and many other developments now permit many people to live who would formerly have died. At the start of the century

15% of all newborn infants died in their first year, and nearly another 15% died before adolescence. Today less than 2% die in their first year. Most people live beyond the age of 70. In industrialized countries today almost two-thirds of those dying die from ailments of old age.

The new technology has been, however, a mixed blessing. Prolonging life has meant in many instances prolonging the dying process. The problem most frequently presents itself as one of medical decision-making at both ends of life, i.e., whether to begin to use or, once begun, to continue to use life-sustaining technology for defective new-borns or elderly terminal patients.

Transplantation. The development of transplantation techniques has forced a reconsideration of the legal definition of death. For example, if a still-beating heart is to be taken from a person for transplantation purposes, in what way, if at all, can the donor be called "dead?" If the donor is not dead, would not the surgeon removing the heart be legally guilty of causing the death? What does constitute death in the legal sense? This question is the reverse side of the legal question raised in abortion discussions, "When does human life begin?"

The Contemporary "Rights" Movement. American society today is expressing widespread concern for the rights of individuals, and for the protection of these rights against any unwarranted invasion by other individuals or institutions. This trend emphasizes the freedom of the individual and the freedom of personal decision-making. In a medical context, there is consumer concern for the patient's "Right to Know" —

to know his condition and prognosis, and treatments available to him — as well as his right to refuse treatment, even life-sustaining treatment.

It is not uncommon to read and hear today of a “Right to Die,” often asserted without making the necessary distinctions between means and end. American law, as interpreted by the courts, is showing less and less inclination to intrude into areas said to be those of private decision and action, thus widening the area of private choice. The “Right to Privacy,” asserted as constitutionally protected in the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* abortion decisions, is certain to be invoked as justification for a person’s constitutional right to terminate his life. Similarly, it is already being argued by some (and rightly feared by others) that if a person has such a “Right to Die,” others have the obligation to see that the right can be exercised, or at least the obligation not to impede its exercise. The import of this line of reasoning for terminal care facilities can easily be imagined.

If the unspeakable, death, is now being spoken about more openly and freely, it is equally true that discussion about “what to do with the dying” is more widespread than ever. Increasingly in the last decade, euthanasia (understood here as the direct taking of the life of the seriously ill) has been publicly advocated in circles — medical, philosophical, religious, and legal — where it was anathema only a few years ago. “Death With Dignity” has become for many a new rallying cry, an apparently harmless and even attractive slogan until one sees the many ambiguities it contains.

The Church’s Role

Christians must reflect upon their understanding of death and dying. They should determine in what way they can best witness in word and action to this understanding in American society today. There is a clear parallel here with what is happening with regard to abortion. As the church cannot restrict itself to denouncing abortion, but must provide realistic alternatives to women contemplating abortion, so it is not enough for the church to decry the euthanasia movement, but must provide realistic alternatives to those who, fearing a prolonged and subhuman dying process, seriously advocate direct euthanasia as a solution.

The strongest appeal of the euthanasia movement lies in its seeming compassion for the dying. Christians, on the other hand, are often pictured as lacking in compassion. An alternative to euthanasia can be found in the Christian theology of death and in its compassionate pastoral application today.

The Christian and Death: Affirming Life and Affirming Death

“Life” can be considered from many points of view — the biological, the sociological, and the theological, to mention only three. “Death” can be considered

in similar terms, as the cessation of biological life; as a phenomenon perceived in various ways by various groups and cultures; or as a human experience understood in light of the Christian community’s reflection on its faith. From whatever vantage point one begins, however, death remains a profound mystery.

The Christian understanding of death is a “faith-view.” This suggests, first, that the Christian view tells the believer something about the mystery of death, but does not completely dispel the mystery. Secondly, the Christian “faith-view,” since it is not self-evident, may be quite unintelligible to those who do not share the Christian faith. St. Paul refers to the “foolishness” of the cross. As Father Schillebeeckx has written: “On the natural level, the death of a man is indeed an absurd phenomenon, senseless, and unintelligible, something that denies all the promise that man bears within himself in his earthly life and shatters all his inmost hopes.” The Christian view is revolutionary: it denies that death is meaningless and absolutely terminal.

The gospel sees life existentially; life is a person’s saying “yes” or “no” to God, either affirming or negating life and its ultimate meaning. In the gospel life is either a “going out” of one’s self in order to find one’s self in the neighbor and in God, or else life is a “turning back upon” one’s self, living a life of egoism and selfishness, which results in alienation from others, from God, and even from one’s self. Death, then, is a triumph for those who have affirmed life and chosen to say “yes” to God; for “the sinner,” i.e., the one who has chosen self over all else, death is the final event of alienation.

Jesus, as true man, took upon himself “the human condition,” including man’s mortality. By his death, Jesus conquered and transformed death. He did so by trust and confidence in the Father, and by a steadfast and unwavering conviction that saying “yes” to the Father would give meaning to a seemingly meaningless death. “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Lk. 23, 46). What seemed the end was not only not that, but also the beginning of a new life, the risen life of the Lord. As Jesus was delivered from death and restored to his original glory in and through his resurrection, those who “die in the Lord,” that is, those who make their own his trust and confidence in the Father, will be “saved,” will share in his triumph over death and its seeming meaninglessness and finality. For the Christian, then, death is not only not an end but a beginning, a breakthrough to the fullness of life with the risen Lord.

Christian faith, however, does not imply that the believer is spared all grief and anxiety in the face of approaching death. Death is still “the enemy,” even if the Christian is armed with weapons more than capable of defeating the enemy. It is instructive to read Matthew’s account of Jesus’ own immediate preparation for his death. “Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them, ‘The sorrow in my

heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and watch with me'” (Mt. 26, 37-38). The pastoral implications of this are important, as has been noted by Dr. Roy Branson of the Kennedy Institute, Georgetown, in commenting on Dr. Kübler-Ross' suggestions for leading the dying toward “acceptance” of their death. Even faith in the resurrection does not remove the grim reality of death.

One of the many paradoxes of the Christian faith is that, on the one hand, the Christian “affirms life” and does all he can to fight against whatever threatens life — hunger, disease, floods and other natural disasters; while on the other hand, the Christian “affirms death,” that is, affirms that he himself is a creature and is therefore mortal, and that it is through the door of death that he must of necessity walk in order to be fully with the Lord. The Christian paradox *par excellence* is that even in “affirming death,” one is “affirming life.”

Pastoral Application: From Curing to Caring

The Church must witness to its understanding of death in action as well as in word. When the time for curing and recovery has passed, healing in the sense of comforting and supporting the dying must come into play. Dr. Paul Ramsey speaks of “company-ing with” the dying. Wherever people are dying — in tenement flats, in nursing homes, in hospitals — the hope and consolation of the Christian message must be proclaimed.

Norman St. John-Stevas puts it well: “Dying . . . can be a vital period in a person's life, reconciling him to life and death, and giving an interior peace. To achieve this, intense, loving and tactful care and cooperation are needed . . . This approach to dying is, I believe, more humane and compassionate than the snuffing out proposed by those who may be well-intentioned, but who seem to understand little of the real needs of those they are seeking to help.”

Although death can come to a person of any age, suddenly or slowly, the following observations pertain particularly to older patients with more or less prolonged terminal illnesses.

▲ The dying are best at teaching others how to care for them. Each patient is unique, and reactions to serious illness will differ from patient to patient, as reactions will differ on the part of a given patient during stages of his own illness. While certain generalizations can be made about the dying, it is essential to discover how *this* person is reacting to terminal illness. This can best be done by being alert not only to what the patient is saying, but equally important, to his non-verbal communications and cues as well.

▲ Two of the leading specialists in the field, Dr. Kübler-Ross, and Dr. Herman Fiebel, have discovered in their practice that, contrary to popular opinion, terminally ill patients generally want to discuss their

situation with someone. They resent the conspiracy of silence that so often surrounds them. In general, the patient's receptivity, sensitively discovered, will determine when and how the seriousness of his illness can best be revealed to him, or its existence confirmed since in many cases the patient already knows the truth. Gradual revelation is in all cases to be preferred to a blunt matter-of-fact announcement.

▲ The counselor must be attuned to the emotions often experienced by the dying patient who knows his diagnosis: denial, anger, fear and anxiety, irritability and hostility, guilt, depression resulting from a sense of isolation from family, friends, work, and familiar surroundings. Great patience, understanding, personal maturity, and willingness to hear out the patient are required of the counselor, who is frequently made the object of hostility transferred by the patient from some other persons (family or health professionals) or from the institution in which the patient unwillingly finds himself.

▲ The patient can be reassured against his anxieties. He can be assured that he is not in fact a bother to others, that his life has in fact been worthwhile, that he is not being punished for past wrongdoing, that he can cope with what lies ahead, and that he will not be abandoned by his loved ones. Most patients, according to Dr. Bernard Schoenberg of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, fear the process of dying more than death itself, i.e., they fear pain that they cannot bear, loss of control of their functions, a kind of regression to infantilism. As one cancer patient put it, “It's not being dead I mind, but the mechanics of dying.” Abandonment is felt especially by the untouchables of our society, cancer victims. Doctors and nurses tend to withdraw through a sense of defeat; friends and relatives withdraw through a sense of helplessness. The patient, nevertheless, needs the reassurance that he is still loved. Often the simplest of reassurances will suffice.

▲ Dr. Kübler-Ross has written that “Truly religious people with an abiding relationship with God have found it much easier to face death with equanimity” than have others. She is quick to point out, however, that the religious faith of which she is speaking must be authentic and internalized, as opposed to superficial and merely external.

The special assurances of the faith must be made available to the Christian who is dying. Often one's caring presence is enough. At other times a word spoken out of personal faith-conviction carries great comfort. This may be a simple confession of belief in the goodness and kindness of God working mysteriously even in difficult times; it may be a reminder of the redemptive value of the suffering the person is called upon to bear. It might be proper to call to the attention of some patients the “Christian Affirmation of Life” of the Catholic Hospital Association. The counselor should not hesitate to suggest prayer, either

leading in the recitation of familiar prayers, or equally important, offering personal prayers of faith, hope, love, and a desire to accept the divine will. Meditative reading of passages from Old and New Testaments is usually appropriate. The reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist can bring great comfort and strength.

The family of the dying person also needs comforting and support. Contemporary society has so emphasized self-control, self-reliance, keeping a "stiff upper-lip," that for one to admit sorrow and the need of assistance during the period before and after the death of a loved one is sometimes considered an admission of weakness and immaturity. There is a natural grieving process both before and after a loss. As the Christian "companies-with" the dying, so he "companies-with" the bereaved, witnessing to the fact that grief in no way constitutes a denial of one's faith. Jesus wept when he learned of the death of his friend Lazarus (Jn. 11, 35).

Just as no person lives alone, no person dies alone. Death occurs in the world of nature and things, movements and social forces die and pass from memory. But the death of every person, famous or unknown, is an important human and supernatural event, and part of the mystery of life. The Second Vatican Council describes the paradox well:

It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute. Not only is man tormented by pain and the advancing deterioration of his own body but even more so by a dread of perpetual extinction. Man rebels against death because he bears in himself an eternal seed which cannot be reduced to sheer matter . . . Although the mystery of death utterly beggars the imagination, the Church has been taught by Divine Revelation, and herself firmly teaches that man has been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery. [*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No. 18]

Program Suggestions

Individual

- If you have a terminally ill friend or relative, visit him or her, or at least phone to inquire about his or her condition and to see if there is anything you can do.
- Volunteer your services at a local hospital or nursing home.
- Pray regularly for the dying and for those ministering to their needs.
- Pray for those recently bereaved.

Parish

- Plan a parish course, series of talks, or a single lecture on "Death and Dying." A four-part series might include a doctor, a hospital chaplain, a funeral director, and a theologian.

- Check the parish library to see if it is up-to-date on reading materials and audiovisual aids on "Death and Dying."
- If no parish organization has a committee concerned with aiding the dying and recently bereaved, consider whether there should be such a committee. Could such a committee reach out to widows and widowers and aid their return to the community?
- Is the parish liturgy committee satisfied that the guidelines of the revised liturgy are sufficiently reflected at local wakes, funeral Masses, and burial rites?

Bibliography and Resource Materials

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Marx, Rev. Paul, *Death Without Dignity: Killing for Mercy*, 1975. Available from: For Life, Inc., 1917 Xerxes Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55411. Cost: 60¢. Quantity rates available.

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Pincus, Lily, *Death and the Family*. N.Y., Pantheon Books, 1974, \$8.95.

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St. John-Stevas, Norman, "Euthanasia: A Pleasant Sounding Word." *America*, 31 May 1975, pp. 421-422.

Veatch, Robert, *Death and Dying*. Chicago, Claretian Publications, 1971, 75¢.

Information on state legislation concerning euthanasia and "Death with Dignity" bills is available from: Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Films

All the Way Home, b/w. Full-length film version of James Agee's "A Death in the Family." Films Inc., 440 Park Ave. So., New York 10016. Rental: \$55.

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, 27 min., b/w. Viewers are caught up into what it means to face death.

Mass Media Ministries, 2116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218. Rental: \$17.50.

Death, b/w. Terminal illness of a 52-year old man filmed at Calvary Hospital, Bronx, N.Y. Filmmakers Library, 290 W. End Ave., New York, N.Y. 10023. Rental: \$35.

Those Who Mourn, 5 min., b/w and color. Through memory flashbacks, the film explores the death of one man and its meaning to his wife. Teleketics, Franciscan Communications Center, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90015. Tel.: 213/748-8331. Rental: \$10; Purchase: \$80. Cat. No. 8120.

To Die Today, b/w. Dr. Kübler-Ross lectures on the stages of dying, and, with medical students, interviews a terminal patient. Filmmakers Library. Rental: \$35.

Who Should Survive?, color. Reenactment of the famous Johns Hopkins case in which a defective newborn is permitted to die. Panel discussion follows. Mr. Herbert Kramer, Lowengard & Brotherhood, 999 Asylum Ave., Hartford, Conn. 06105. Rental: \$20.

Since its beginning in 1972, the Respect Life Program has focused attention on a number of important issues. Although it is not possible to cover each issue every year, we would like to make reference to several organizations and programs that can provide assistance on various aspects of the diocesan Respect Life efforts.

- Bishops' Committee for the Bicentennial, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Tel: 202/659-6832.
- Bread for the World, 235 E. 49th St., New York, N.Y. 10017. Tel: 212/751-3925.
- Campaign for Human Development, 1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Tel: 202/659-6694.
- National Apostolate for the Mentally Retarded, P.O. Box 4588, Washington, D.C. 20017. Tel: 202/462-1077.

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