

voices voices voices



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"Inclusive Language" Bible? Catholics say NO!

CATHOLIC AMERICANS REJECT NEUTERED ENGLISH, according to a nationwide poll of Catholic opinion, commissioned by the *Catholic World Report*. The poll, conducted in February, has demolished the notion that American Catholics demand "inclusive language" translations of liturgical texts.

A survey of 1,000 Catholics, conducted by the Roper Center*, shows that 69% reject the notion that new translations of the Bible and liturgical texts should use "inclusive language"; only 21% prefer such translations.

The poll's findings sharply contradict the claim that there is an "urgent pastoral need" to capitulate to feminist demands for so-called "inclusive language" in new translations of the Scripture or the prayers used for Mass.

For several years, Catholic scholars have debated whether new translations should use language which avoids the use of words such as "man" and "mankind" in general references to humanity. Proponents of "inclusive language" argue that use of such generic words offends women.

The results of the Roper poll, however, show that women are as likely as men to oppose "inclusive language": 68% of the women surveyed, and 70% of the men, rejected this translation approach, indicating strong preference for standard English.

When asked to compare four pairs of scripture texts — matching a passage from the *New American Bible* currently used for the Lectionary (Scripture selections) read at Mass with a new "inclusive language" version of the same text (the *Revised New American Bible*) — substantial majorities of those responding to the Roper survey chose the standard English translations.

The preference for standard English was most pronounced among regular churchgoers, and Catholics who supported Church teachings on controversial issues such as abortion and the ordination of women; it was weakest among Catholics who disagree with those teachings, and do not regularly attend Mass.

For several years, controversy has surrounded the process of approving proposed Scripture and liturgical texts — the most massive revisions of Catholic liturgy in the thirty years since the Second Vatican Council. The controversy centers on the demand for neutered English by influential feminist liturgists and theologians. Resistance to this ideological transformation of the worship of the Catholic Church has been building since the 1980's, when the American bishops proposed to write a pastoral letter on "women's concerns" which would have required "non-sexist"

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HELP WANTED...

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED to send your donation to Women for Faith & Family?

We do not ask *Voices* readers for contributions very often, so you may be surprised at how long it has been since you last sent us a donation.

As many of you know, the WFF staff are volunteers, and do most of our work in our homes. This means that we have very little overhead, so nearly every dollar we receive is used directly to accomplish the purposes of WFF.

But we still have expenses, obviously. Sometimes rather large ones—like publishing *Voices*, which is sent without charge to a growing list.

Several recent activities and necessary purchases of office equipment have made quite a dent in our budget, and there are other needs coming up. Here are some of them:

NEW FAX NUMBER - 314-863-5858

Some of you may have tried to call us or send a fax and got repeated busy-signals. This is because we transmit a lot of information via fax and e-mail which has tied up our phone line. We know how frustrating this is, and we apologize.

To keep up with the volume of telephone and fax traffic—both US and international—we have installed a new dedicated fax line. This means two monthly phone bills, of course.

We look forward to receiving your next call—or fax!

COMPUTER SCANNER NEEDED

In December we had to replace our old computer. But we find that we also really need a computer “scanner”, which will make it possible for us copy photographs and articles into the computer, and will save many hours of work for the staff.

The scanner will also be useful for a Women for Faith & Family “World Wide Web Page”. The WFF web page will make our publications—especially our “Family Sourcebooks” and articles from *Voices*—accessible to Internet users. We are working on the “web page” right now, and it should be running within the next few weeks.

We estimate that a moderately priced scanner which meets our needs will cost between \$400. and \$600.

TRAVEL FOR CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

An important part of WFF’s apostolate is representing Catholic women at conferences and meetings — especially those involving “women’s issues” or the family.

When we attend these conferences, like the **Vatican Inter-**

national Conference on Women I attended in December (story on page 2), we economize in every way we can think of to keep the expenses down.

But even so, we are unable to attend some important meetings because of the expenses involved.

One very recent example of one we had to miss was a preparatory conference in New York for the next **United Nations population conference**. We had accreditation from the UN, and worked with other pro-life, pro-family people who did attend; but we should have been on the scene to help.

Also, as director of WFF, I am a board member of several other Catholic organizations. This often involves meetings and conferences -- and travel expenses.

We do not like to miss these meetings. They keep WFF up-to-date on what others are doing, and foster stronger communication between WFF and other like-minded groups.

We know that you are counting on WFF to continue our diligent work for the Church and for Catholic women in religious, professional, and family life.

We depend on you entirely—your prayers and your donations—to continue our efforts for women, the faith and the family. We have no other source of financial support. So we hope you will please be as generous as you can.

Thank-you, and God bless you!



Helen Hull Hitchcock
for the Staff of Women for Faith & Family

Catholics say NO (continued from page 1)

language and other changes in the Church’s worship and practice. The pastoral failed, but the problem persists.

In the early 1990s, new Scripture translations were introduced, in English-speaking countries. All these revised translations incorporate neutered language.

The new texts for Mass—Lectionary and Sacramentary—will be reviewed by the American bishops at their June meeting, but all English-speaking churches throughout the world will be affected.

*The Roper Center conducts polls for clients such as The Wall Street Journal and New York Times. A poll of this size is considered reliable to an overall accuracy of within 3 percent.

The results of the Roper survey appeared in the March issue of *Catholic World Report*, an international monthly news magazine. Full results of the survey may be obtained from CWR for a token price. Send requests to: Survey, PO Box 567, Dedham, MA 02027

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Vatican Conference on Women

International assembly confers on challenges to women, Church

by Helen Hull Hitchcock

WHAT DOES IT MEAN to be a Catholic woman at the dawn of the Third Millennium? How can Catholic women throughout the world respond to the challenges to "care for humanity" within a "culture of death"? Can women of the Church working together find ways of advancing the true dignity of women? What are the dynamics of "empowerment"? Is there a "feminine spirituality" distinct from any other kind? Can there be a "Catholic feminism"? What is the "genius of women"? Can we meet the challenges to the faith that Catholics must face today?

These are some of the questions raised by those of us who attended an international gathering of 120 Catholic women, convened by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, last December 6-8. The meeting, titled "A Renewed Commitment of All for the Good of the World's Women", was held in a conference center on the outskirts of Rome.

The Laity Council brought together Catholic women leaders of movements, representatives of Catholic organizations and national churches, scholars, writers and pro-life activists to observe the anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women of the United Nations in Beijing in 1995, and to explore issues affecting women. The principle of selecting those invited to this meeting was not altogether clear, but many had attended the Beijing conference, as well as a pre-Beijing conference also convened by the Laity Council in June 1995.

The intense three-day meeting included lectures, "working group" sessions, public interventions, and liturgical celebrations.

On Saturday, December 7, there was an unscheduled audience with Pope John Paul II in the Clementine audience hall at the Vatican. After reading his message, the Holy Father greeted each of the women individually.

"New Feminism"?

The group listened to addresses based on the teachings of Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortations and encyclicals of the 1980s and the cluster of pre-Beijing letters and addresses in 1995. These pre-Beijing letters, like his earlier works, stressed the Church's affirmation of the dignity of women, but



Archbishop J. Francis Stafford and Helen Hull Hitchcock at the close of the International Conference on Women

they also urged action to overcome the "terrible exploitation of women and girls," praised women who have devoted their lives to fight for social, economic and political rights for women, referred to the "great process of women's liberation" as "substantially positive," called for a "campaign for the promotion of women," and called for a "new feminism" initiated by the "genius of women."

Working group sessions grappled with interpreting terms used in the pope's letters, such as "feminism," "empowerment" and "genius of women," and attempted to understand and formulate ways of implementing the Holy Father's call to women in his pre-Beijing messages.

Some participants seemed confused about the objective of "new feminism": is it solely to advance women's rights in the world? Is it related to the Church's call for women's active witness in the "New Evangelization"? Does it intend to encourage Catholic women to respond to contemporary challenges to

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the faith, especially in matters concerning women and families?

One of the concerns that surfaced during the conference is that it is possible to use the Holy Father's words in a way he clearly did not intend and would not approve. In his pre-Beijing letters, the Pope means to affirm and encourage women; but he has also consistently stressed that the dignity and equality of women must be understood within the context of the truth about the human person as reflected in authoritative Catholic teaching. In these papal letters a certain ambiguity of expression concerning "feminism," undoubtedly intended to facilitate dialogue with non-Catholics and non-Christians at the UN meetings, has been cited by Catholics who reject Church teaching — especially on the issues of abortion, family, ordination and Church authority — to support their claim that Catholic doctrine can and should be changed.

Misinterpretation of the Pope's words and intentions can present very serious difficulties in the effort to respond to these challenges to Catholic beliefs, and impedes, rather than facilitates, the "New Evangelization" the Pope has called for so often.

Converting the Culture

In his opening address, **Archbishop J. Francis Stafford**, the new Prefect of the Pontifical Council for the Laity who had only recently arrived in Rome, made it clear that the task of all Christians is to transform the world, not to conform to it.

He spoke eloquently of the way in which our "post-modern" culture, dominated by knowledge, science and technology, dehumanizes and leads to a "world without women, without love...where power and profit are the sole criteria" for human achievement. Developing this theme of the late Swiss theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, the archbishop drew out the implications of this skewed emphasis which leads to a devaluation of women and dissolution of the culture.

Modern liberalism, Archbishop Stafford said, insists on social construction through social edicts. The fractures between creation and redemption, nature and grace, faith and reason has led to a loss of the sense of unity of man and woman, and has led to a coercive fear, not to peace and freedom.

"Our ears," he said, must be "paschal ears...with the early women disciples we await the dawn revealed in the Risen One."

Mary's acceptance of God's will is our pattern for recovery of "creative receptivity." Her example enables us to "make room for the other"—calling us to self-giving love, as an exercise of creative freedom.

Converting our culture will require a "paradigm shift," a Christian formation of public ethics, Archbishop Stafford said.

**"Converting our culture
will require a
'paradigm shift'—
a Christian formation of
public ethics."**

—Archbishop Stafford

"Love is constitutive of all created being, as it should be—and love is not external to us."

Archbishop Stafford was also principal celebrant and homilist at conference Masses and devotions, and gave summary remarks at the close of the meeting.

The former archbishop of Denver was appointed in August to succeed **Eduardo Cardinal Pironio**, who had presided over the pre-Beijing conference sponsored by the Laity Council last June.

Fundamental Choices

Lucienne Salle, of the PCL secretariat and moderator of the conference, introduced **Mary Ann Glendon**, the dynamic Harvard law professor who led the Vatican delegation to Beijing and is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Social Science. Her address was called "Women Faced with Fundamental Choices: difficulties, challenges and prospects in the contemporary culture."

Women are faced with fundamental choices today, Professor Glendon said. "We have no choice but to be active. We are called to sanctify time. Choices will help shape society...we either build a 'civilization of life and love', or we participate in a 'culture of death'."

Aspects of our current situation are unprecedented, said Professor Glendon, and we are presented with novel challenges. We should re-

evaluate how "organized feminism" responded to these challenges, which include care-taking, motherhood and a crisis in values and beliefs. Christian social thought presents a better approach, she said. She pointed, in particular, to the growing problem of euthanasia and "assisted suicide," whose victims are often women. She mentioned the dilemma posed to families by the contradictions between human values and the values of the marketplace—intensified if women workers are mothers of young children.

Professor Glendon referred to the Pope's pre-Beijing letters on women, noting his approach was to find what is good in feminism and build on it.

She noted the "scotoma" of "organized feminism's" view that marriage and motherhood are an obstacle to freedom of women; that this view has led to "no-fault" divorce and the sexual revolution.

Although "organized feminism offers ideological stones for bread," she believes it is a mistake to "let disenchantment with the fruits" of feminism sour us on the longings which are genuine. She made a distinction between what she termed "organized feminism" and a "new feminism" grounded on authentic understanding of the nature of the human person—though "not, perhaps, to be called 'feminism'."

A "new feminism" she said, is grounded in the truth about the human person found in Pope John Paul II's writing. She noted that before Beijing, his tone was dialogical, modest. But the challenge of Beijing led him to adopt "feminist language" in his letters re-affirming the dignity of women, according to Professor Glendon, seeming to imply that this language was meant to facilitate communication at the feminist-dominated Beijing meeting.

She mentioned as examples of the Pope's commitment to "welcome the contribution of women at all levels," the unprecedented number of appointments of women to curial staffs.

Perhaps referring to the outraged response of feminists to the Pope's reaffirmation of the Church's teaching on the male priesthood, Professor Glendon noted that some women say this participation of women in the "decision-making process" is not enough.

Her response? "Well, the Holy Father says 'it's not enough'!" However, she did not explain what would be "enough" to satisfy feminist demands.

Although never in the history of Christianity have women faced more complicated problems, the Pope's teachings offer more solutions, she observed, and said the ideas of theologian **Bernard Lonergan** had impressed her deeply.

In times of cultural upheaval the "solid right is determined to live in a world that no longer exists," the "left" errs on the other side—but we must be at home in the old as well as the new, recognizing possibilities in the current situation, Professor Glendon said. Women should "meet the challenges of our time with boldness, patience and imagination."

Exploitations

A different analysis was advanced by **Kathryn Hoomkwap**, a forceful speaker who wore the costume of her native Nigeria. In her address, "Women Protect Life and Take Care of Humanity," she drew heavily on African culture.

Mrs. Hoomkwap, who has a degree in political science, was a speaker at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1994, and attended UN conferences in Beijing and Istanbul. She is a consultant to the Pontifical Council on Culture.

"I told journalists at Beijing I was happy with motherhood," she told the assembly. This was apparently effective in diminishing the power of pro-abortion rhetoric by focusing on the exploitation of "developing" countries by the industrialized



Helen Hitchcock and Leonie Caldecott of Oxford, England, at the Apostolic Palace.

west—a view widely held among feminist leaders at Beijing.

In her address to this symposium she gave several examples unfavorably comparing cultural attitudes of the industrialized west with those of Africa.

"Celibacy of priests," she said emphatically, "is not recognized in African culture. It is thought of as sacrificing his God-given procreative power on the altar of false religiosity." (Her comment seemed to parallel the demand that the Church must allow priests to marry given by an African bishop during the Synod on Religious Life.) Chastity, on the other hand, especially in young girls, is prized.

She complained of the bad effects and exploitation of western industrialization on African people. Not only are the cultural attitudes imposed by the west alien to African culture, but "creation is exploited, and water is polluted" by industrialized nations. Mrs.

Hoomkwap did not say whether she believes economic advancement of "developing" nations can proceed without modern industry or technology.

She believes the hidden agenda of the industrialized countries is to force population control on her people, and to "decimate as much African population as possible" through abortion, birth control, etc. She said she is "pro-peace because in war women get raped." She also urged promotion of Natural Family Planning, and said the Church should mount a media campaign against abortion. She hopes women's groups and pro-life groups will work with the Vatican to promote rights for women.

Although Mrs. Hoomkwap is convinced that the problems of women in developing countries are caused by coercive cultural pollution from the west, she is evidently not as convinced of the destructive potential of western feminism.

The Struggle to Define "Feminism"

Later, in the working group session I attended, Mrs. Hoomkwap insisted use of the word "feminism" and feminist vocabulary such as "empowerment" is necessary in order to secure women's rights.

I pointed out that the term "feminism" has become indelibly tainted because of its intrinsic connection with demands for abortion "rights" and other issues fundamentally opposed to Catholic teaching about human life and the family. This was evident in the intense debates over "women's rights" in Beijing.

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Women and the Problem of Place

In the ordering of place we find a blueprint for revolutionizing society

by Donald DeMarco

IT WAS A LIVE TELEVISION broadcast from British Columbia. Things were moving along briskly and cordially. Not a breath of controversy. I had just made the rather bland remark that men and women were different in a multitude of complementary ways, and alluded to the cover story in *Time* magazine's current issue: "Why are Men and Women Different?" (Jan. 20, 1992).

At that point, my most ingratiating hostess smiled at me and asked, "So, where, then, do you think the place of women is?" It was a bit of a *non sequitur*. But there could be no doubt that it was aimed at sparking controversy. Cordiality sustains relationships. Controversy sustains the media.

Nonetheless, I was not willing to fall into the trap. I decided to build on my previous statement and avoid any mention of the "place" of women. But the question stayed with me long after the show. I was right, I felt, to dodge the issue. Today's woman greatly prizes her hard-won mobility. The last thing she wants to hear is any word of being consigned to a "place." Especially from a man.

If we want to speak about anyone's "place," perhaps we should begin with that member of the human family who is least mobile. I came to the conclusion that my interviewer asked me the wrong question. She should have asked, "So, where, then do you think the place of the unborn child is?"

The unborn, of course, has no mobility, at least in terms of moving from one place to another. Even so, some would like the unborn to be transferred to an incubator in order to allow its mother as much mobility during her "pregnancy" as possible. A technique known as "embryo transfer" is designed to relocate the embryo from the uterus of the genetic mother to that of the "custodial" mother. Lawyer Shari O'Brien has written critically about the "itinerant embryo." Abortionists do not mind placing the unborn child in garbage cans, dumpsters, and incinerators. But in the main, and in accord with the pattern of

nature, the "place" of the unborn is in the uterus of the mother.

The uterus itself, is not supposed to be mobile. The ancient Greeks identified a "wandering" uterus with hysteria, after the Greek word "hysteria" which designates the uterus. Thus, the immobile unborn should occupy a place within an environment which is itself relatively immobile.

At any rate, had I been asked about the "place" of the unborn, I would not have hesitated to declare that it is its mother's womb. And if this remark sparked controversy, I would have welcomed it. There must be a fixed point that gives meaning to the fluidity of our society, the way the stationary needle gives meaning to the rotating phonograph record. Poet T.S. Eliot talked about the central significance of the "still point in a moving world." He was a great admirer of Aristotle and Dante who erected cosmological and poetic systems around this pivotal idea. Could it be that the moral universe revolves around

Could it be that the moral universe revolves around the sleeping child who inhabits the still point of its mother's womb?

the sleeping child who inhabits the still point of its mother's womb?

It would have been a wonderful and infinitely fertile question, one that would have inevitably led to a host of other questions. "Well, if the place of the unborn is in the uterus, then that child will ultimately be born; then where will its place be?" "Why I'm glad you asked," I would say, "surely in its mother's arms."

Now it is in this context that the question concerning the mother's place would have a more directed meaning. The mother's place would be in her husband's arms. The womb protects the child, the mother protects her baby, the father protects both his wife and child. The father's place, here, has the greatest degree of mobility since he must take his place in the world in order to provide for his family. And the world, to continue the image, should place itself in the presence of God. It should be noted here that a key to this natural sequence is that the "place" of sex is within marriage. Sex sets everything in motion. If sex is out of place, the whole universe is out of place.

Dr. Donald DeMarco, who will speak at the 1997 WFF conference, is a professor of philosophy at University of St. Jerome's College, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. This essay is taken from his 1997 book, *Character in a Time of Crisis*, published by the Central Bureau of the Catholic Central Union, St. Louis.

With this ordering of place, commencing with the unborn and incorporating marriage, fidelity, and providence, we find a blueprint for revolutionizing society. If, on the other hand, we begin by maximizing woman's mobility on every level of her life, we assume a position that is inimical to pregnancy, childbirth, marriage, fidelity, and providence, and consequently, one that destroys the cohesiveness society needs in order to function for the good of the whole.

The notion of locating everyone's place in society with respect to the place of the unborn is in accord with Holy Scripture. According to Genesis, first there is God, then the world, man, woman, and finally the child. As God's creation unfolds, the movement proceeds to things that are increasingly less and less mobile. As we return to God, we re-enact the direction of creation in reverse, moving from the least active to the most active, from the child to the mother to the father to the world to God.

Secular feminism, which encourages mobility as intensely as it abhors the concept of a woman's place, has an ordination that leads away from God to an imaginary utopia that cannot exist. The Greek etymology of the word "utopia" literally means "a place that is no place." The title of Samuel Butler's satire on utopia, *Erewhon*, is an anagram for "nowhere" spelled backwards.

A person who has not found his proper "place," his so called "place in the sun," is said to be "no place" or "going nowhere." But "place" in this sense has a moral connotation and implies *relationship*. Even more than this, it implies a relationship of *care*. Milton Mayerhoff states in his book, *On Caring*, that "We are 'in-place' in the world through having our lives ordered by inclusive caring" (New York: Harper & Row, 1971, p. 54). A person's proper "place," therefore, is where that person is best able to care for others. The social ordering of care is based on

the least mobile members of society. In a hospital setting, for example, medical activities of the "abled" revolve around the needs of those who are disabled. The relatively mobile find their place of caring in association with those who are less mobile. In this regard, the unborn becomes the centerpiece for society, setting the standard for caring and being in-place.

Abortionism is most pernicious in our society because it disregards the most natural and fundamental standard by which all members can understand their proper places and their caring roles. By abandoning the keystone significance of the child in the womb, society turns itself in the wrong direction, facing nowhere, and exhausts itself in a fit of meaningless mobility. Instead of encouraging the more mobile to care for the less mobile, society encourages the former to envy the latter. But society becomes more humanized and complete not through envy but through care.

St. Augustine once said that "Things are at home when they are in place, and the place for the human heart is the heart of God." This is a beautiful image of place in the context of caring. That God's heart should care for us human beings tells us something rather profound about the humility that is an essential part of both care and knowing one's place. This notion is also in accord with our Christian mandate to love the least of God's little ones.

The ambitious person in today's mobile world speaks of "going places." The plural form of the word "place" is most significant. We should not be so much concerned about the plurality of places we are heading towards (which will probably turn out to be "no place") as much as the one place where we are best able to care. Knowing one's place is knowing where one is best able to receive and transmit God's caring love.

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I said that the errors of feminism need to be explained; that there must be no confusion about how the principles of feminist ideology conflict with the Church's essential doctrines. I also mentioned that the spiritual poverty of feminism is evident in the quasi-pagan "spiritualities" promoted by feminist groups in America — including especially some Catholic women religious. Several other members of the working group (from Germany, Poland, Hungary, Australia) agreed that this is a problem. But apparently these destructive elements of western feminism are unknown in Nigeria.

To a suggestion that the concept of feminism, as it is known in the west, cannot be separated from its basic agenda which includes the "right" to abortion, Mrs. Hoomkwap responded, "We must wash the word clean! Christ has already washed it!" Just as Christ emptied himself on the Cross, she said, we must empty the word "feminism" of any of its negative connotations.

She pointed to the Pope's use of this word in his pre-Beijing letters; but she did not say how she thought this linguistic

cleansing could be accomplished.

When members of the working group began to discuss the possibility of finding an alternative to the word "feminism", Mrs. Hoomkwap exclaimed, "It is not an occupied term! [Feminism] is an old Christian term and we want to reclaim it!" She said that she had told her bishops that she was coming to this meeting to promote feminism.

Although Mrs. Hoomkwap did not participate in writing this working-group's report, her views were influential.

The final report listed several things that "undermine the dignity of women": lack of clean water, poverty, violence, lack of health services, and lack of participation in decision-making-processes. These are standard items which appear on most secular feminist lists.

Conspicuous by their absence from this list compiled by Catholic women attending a Vatican conference were coercive birth-control and abortion policies, destruction of families through divorce or abandonment, euthanasia, aberrant sexual

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New Directives for Confessors Stress Catechesis

"It is fundamental that their conscience be formed and that God's will be fulfilled..."

"CONTRACEPTION, DIRECTLY OPPOSED to the transmission of life, betrays and falsifies the self-sacrificing love proper to marriage, 'altering its value of total self-giving', and contradicting God's design of love, in which it has been granted to married couples to participate," states a new Vatican document. The forthright statement is contained in a *Vade Mecum* for the Use of Confessors, released March 1 by the Pontifical Council for the Family "at the request of the Holy Father."

The *Vade Mecum* gives guidelines to confessors for helping married couples understand the Church's teaching concerning contraception and other aspects of sexuality. In order to "...be aware of the path of their holiness and to carry out their mission, it is fundamental that their conscience be formed and that God's will be fulfilled..."

Since Pope Paul VI reaffirmed the Church's constant teaching on contraception in the much discussed but little read encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human Life), no moral teaching of the Church has been more misunderstood, resisted, ridiculed, complained about, or rejected — by Catholics. As many recent polls have confirmed, the Church's real message "of human life" did not get through. Some have said that people do not so much reject the Church's teaching on birth-control, as they didn't get the message to begin with. The reasons for this are many, and in part reflect a general cultural pattern of rejection of all authority. But Catholic moral theologians and others responsible for formation of Catholic minds bear much of the responsibility.

New Religious Community Serves Gospel of Life

The Servants of the Gospel of Life, a new community of religious women, is being formed in the Archdiocese of Newark under the leadership of Archbishop Theodore McCarrick.

Committed to teaching the Gospel of Life and promoting fidelity to the Magisterium, the sisters will devote themselves to evangelization and works of mercy.

Single women between the ages of 21 and 45 who are interested in learning more should write to: Sister Thomas Mary Salerno, Archdiocesan Center, 171 Clifton Ave, Newark, NJ 07014 (Att'n: Sister Diane Carollo).

Faced with the obvious and overwhelming failure to transmit core teachings of the Catholic faith, the Holy Father is responding with renewed vigor in transmitting the Church's teaching on the "life issues" (including contraception). This concern for the Church's moral teaching on these matters was evident in the statement *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) released March 30, 1995.

In July 1996, a statement on Christian marriage preparation was issued, also by the Pontifical Council for the Family, which reaffirmed the teachings of earlier documents, such as *Familiaris Consortio* (1980), and called for "thorough, patient instruction that arouses and nourishes the order of a living faith... Especially where the environment has become paganized..."

Because the latest document is addressed to priests who will hear confessions of couples, it also refers to *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, in addition to the encyclicals and apostolic exhortations which focus on the Church's teachings.

In addition to the concise review of Catholic teaching on contraception, the *Vade Mecum* counsels confessors to provide a "thorough catechesis on the Christian vocation to marital love and on the joyful and demanding dimensions, its grace and personal commitment." It also speaks of maintaining "uniform criteria with regard to the evil of the contraceptive act"; yet it counsels confessors to take into account "special difficulties" which may lead to "cooperation in the sin of a spouse" who uses contraception.

The new guidelines for confessors say that "sacramental absolution is not to be denied to those who, repentant after having gravely sinned against conjugal chastity, demonstrate the desire to strive to abstain from sinning again." The document also says that the confessor is to avoid "exactingly humanly impossible absolute guarantees of an irreproachable future conduct."

The understanding shown by the confessor should not be interpreted by a penitent as a weakening of the Church's doctrine, as the *Vade Mecum* makes clear. The fact that a person seeks the sacrament of penance indicates a predisposition to receive instruction.

"The moment in which the spouses ask for and receive the sacrament of reconciliation represents a salvific event of the greatest importance for accepting the demands of authentic love and of God's plan in their daily life. It provides an illuminating occasion for deepening their faith and a concrete aid in carrying out God's plan in their lives."

Helping a person to understand the Church's teachings is the responsibility of a priest who hears confessions. This document intends to help priests use this opportunity for authentic teaching.

Sherry Tyree Addresses Catholics in Capetown

Interest in WFF high as feminism, abortion make inroads in South Africa

ON ASH WEDNESDAY, Sherry Tyree addressed a group of Catholic women at St. Paul's Church, Somerset West, outside of Cape Town, South Africa.

"After years of isolation from the West, knowledge of the activities of the Catholic Church in America was surprising, but also inconsistent," Mrs. Tyree said. "People have heard of well-known Catholics like **Father Paul Marx, Janet Smith, Monsignor William Smith**, but had never heard of partial-birth abortion. There's a lot of catching up to do."

During their stay in Capetown in February, the Tyrees met **Father Joseph Murphy, SJ**, a theologian formerly of St. Louis who is now teaching at the seminary in Pretoria. Father Murphy, who has addressed WFF audiences in the past, is frequently a guest on a well-known radio program and has done much to advance knowledge of Catholic teaching.

Mrs. Tyree was also interviewed by a parishoner of St. Paul's, **Haidee Hall**. The interview was videotaped (Metanoia Productions) and will be used to encourage and inform other South African women who are concerned about critical issues affecting Catholic women and their families.

This interest in Women for Faith & Family was heightened by the recent South African liberalization of the existing abortion law. Reportedly, so many nurses and doctors of all races are refusing to participate in the

abortion procedure that some hospitals are now stating that they are unable to comply with the liberalized law.

However, Mrs. Tyree observed that western feminism has thoroughly pervaded the African National Congress (ANC), the party now in power in South Africa. American and other Western feminists have influenced even the language and expression used.

Feminist jargon words such as "empowerment" are becoming common. While the context of the South African experience, and the cessation of "apartheid" makes this influence of liberationism and the language of "oppression" understandable, it is ironic that the new "freedom" is increasingly coercive. For example, members of Congress who are members of the ANC were *forced* to vote the party-line on the abortion issue. They were not free to dissent from the ANC's position to liberalize the abortion laws.

However, South Africa remains essentially a traditional country according to Mrs. Tyree. "A number of people told me that many people of all races are so traditional that they are likely to resist the new abortion law. Whether they will persist in their traditional beliefs, contrary to the ruling party, remains to be seen."

Interest is also keen, she said, among orthodox Catholics who want to fight this new law and who want to benefit from the experience of American Catholics who have had to deal with legal abortion for many years.

1997 Women for Faith & Family Conference

**The Year of Christ—
"Go, tell what you have seen and
heard"**

October 24-26, 1997 — St. Louis

Contact WFF office for information on registration, exhibitors

practices, negative moral influence of the media, moral relativism, weakening or abandonment of religious belief, lack of support by social institutions, churches and schools for traditional moral and ethical principles. Arguably all these missing items undermine the dignity of women (and men and children) at least as much as those listed.

The report did note the disagreement within the group over using "feminism" and "empowerment". Although a consensus was not reached, the report said,

"We decided we would use them but use them in light of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Empowerment is not only radical autonomy, it can also mean support and the building up of others.

"The majority of the group agreed with Mary Ann Glendon when she stated that it is a risk to use these terms and then asked why the Holy Father uses them. We thought that he uses these words as an instrument to reach out to everyone of good will by including those outside of the Church.

"Our definition of 'feminism' is not to restrict it only to women, but to integrate the partnership between men and women, taking from *Evangelium Vitae*, 'the flourishing of men and women and children in the culture of love.'

"We had a very strong discussion on the complexity and diversity of feminism in the various traditions, cultures and historical backgrounds. Feminism began with a sincere effort to work for the rights of women—raising awareness of the injustices and inequalities. We are aware that it was Christianity that brought about the fundamental change to the dignity of women.

"Recognizing and acknowledging the words expressed by the Holy Father in his Letter to Women, there is still room for more dialogue and space for decision-making roles for women within the Church. It's a case of theory and practice.

"We are very much afraid of the contemporary feminism which takes into consideration only the radical autonomy of women. This can be the cause of heavy struggle between the sexes which in turn interferes with the building up of community in society.

"At the same time, it is true that responsibilities are not divided equally in society and all over the world generally, women and children carry more burdens and responsibilities in society through family and social life, [but] this is not always recognized or appreciated.

The teachings of the Holy Father, especially from *Evangelium Vitae*, taking into consideration the situation in diversity all over the world, we can consider that the 'new feminism' should be the responsible use of the

creative talents of women to build up a partnership between both men and women to make together a better world for the next generation."

The conflict over feminist language that surfaced in this conference is ironic, especially in the context of the Cairo, Beijing and Istanbul conferences. UN proposals consistently used loaded terms not well understood by many of the participating countries, and this was protested by the Vatican.

One example is the term "reproductive health," a well known euphemism for abortion and birth-control, often imposed by government aid programs. The Vatican and pro-life delegates from English-speaking countries had great difficulty convincing other delegates that "reproductive health" meant anything more than its positive surface meaning, and that it would be disastrous if this term were used in the UN document.

Another example of feminist language manipulation is the attempt to redefine "family" to include virtually any group of people who chose to call themselves a family, especially homosexual living arrangements. The Holy See and other pro-family delegations strenuously protested this.

Still another instance of feminist abuse of language is the demand to substitute the word "gender" for "sex." The intention is to extend the concept of sex beyond male and female—the term "gender" would include "trans-gendered" and homosexuals. This was also resisted by the Vatican and other pro-life delegations.

Challenges, Warnings, Teachings

Other addresses at this meeting merit a more detailed account than we can include here. Two of these contained warnings for the world, and especially for women, by women from former Communist countries.

Hanna Suchoka, the former Prime Minister of Poland, told of her country's current clash over values in the context of severe economic problems. "Are women less interested in power than men?" she asked. "Are women more likely than men to make sacrifices for their families or for the good of society?" Assuming they are willing to make these sacrifices, how can they be encouraged to do this without also denying them an opportunity to develop their full potential which would benefit society?

Irina Ilovaiski Alberti, editor of *Russia Cristiana* now living in Paris, spoke on the "feminine genius" in the cultural and religious tradition of peoples. "What I say may seem outdated," she began, "but creativity is a true gift that has been given to women," and this special "creativity" of women is always linked with motherhood. She spoke of the way Russian women throughout history actively (and sometimes almost fiercely) tried to protect the Christian faith.

"We are very much afraid of contemporary feminism which takes into consideration only the radical autonomy of women. ..."

—Working Group Report

But Russia, after 70 years of Communism and suppression of Christianity is still deeply damaged, despite the heroic work of the "babushkas" or "grandmothers" who kept the faith alive in every way they knew how. The task for Catholic women today, no less than at any other age, is to become truly "educators in love," and to transform suffering into courageous action. She believes that the prophecy at Fatima is still current, and that until the spiritual health of Russia is restored, the rest of the world is endangered.

The two final addresses explored the biblical and theological basis for Catholic teaching, not only concerning the innate dignity of the human person, but the particular design of the Creator for women.

The first, by **Professor Bruna Costacurta**, who teaches scripture at the Gregorian University in Rome, focused on the creation account in Genesis and its significance for Christians of our time, drawing on the Pope's "catechesis on the book of Genesis." **Father Angelo Scola**, rector of the Lateran University and a theologian, gave a cogent overview of Pope John Paul's teaching on the human person and the nuptial meaning of the body.

Differences More than Cultural

Distinctly different perspectives were evident within this international group of Catholic women. These differences came not primarily from the various cultures and languages, but from divergent beliefs about essential matters. This was made palpably clear in both public interventions and in informal conversations.

Some women seemed primarily interested in advancing the social position of the world's women today. Others seemed more deeply concerned about the unique responsibilities of women *qua* women, and how women are called to serve the mission of the Church in our time. There were also differences over Church teachings.

- A particularly lively debate took place during lunch one day, when a French leader of a charitable organization expressed her belief that the Church's position on abortion lacks "compassion," and that the definition of "family" should be broadened to include other models. Vigorous objections were raised by a writer and mother of three from England, and a teacher and mother of five from Hungary, who argued that this position was precisely the view of the UN feminists and in direct contradiction to Catholic teaching.

- In another conversation at dinner, a Vatican curial official from France expressed surprise at the relative youth of an American writer. "You defend tradition. I thought you would be very old," she said. The American responded that in her experience, young Catholic women are more likely to be active in support of Church teachings and tradition than most older

women.

- A participant from Argentina was articulate in disputing the claim that "feminism" could be rehabilitated. How can they not realize the devastation caused by feminism and liberationism, she wondered.

- A Syrian woman described how she literally risked her life to establish chapters of Girl Guides in Syria where such activity is forbidden, in order to establish programs that would encourage Muslim girls to improve their lives. She complained bitterly that Syrian Catholic clergy will do nothing to aid this work, are content with the "status quo," and ignore women.

Although somewhat more subdued, the interventions during the discussion periods also revealed strong divergence of opinion.

- An English woman noted the paradox in women's relationship to violence, observing that women are very often *perpetrators* of violence, not merely *victims*, and this fact should be acknowledged and addressed by Church leaders.

- A young Belgian journalist and pro-life activist, questioning the term "new feminism," observed that one of the great challenges to the Church today is that the language of

**"Are women less interested in power than man?
Are women more likely than men to make sacrifices...?"**

— Hanna Suchoka

the Church is being given a new interpretation which changes the meaning.

- A representative of a Christian workers' association worried that although the Holy Father adopts feminist language, a new generation of women wants to distance themselves from this ideology, and the word "feminism" detracts from what the Pope has done to advance the understanding of women.

- A German woman associated with a scholarly organization pleaded with considerable emotion that Archbishop Stafford respond to the Spirit speaking through "signs of the time" and to *listen* to the women who are not interested in "power," but want to serve the Church—as deacons.

- A nun from India spoke of the dangers of "fundamentalism" and asked that the problem of Muslim and Hindu women who have no rights be taken up by the Holy See.

- A Spanish woman representing the "Neo-Catechumenate" urgently warned that the Serpent is attacking the Woman, and called for prayer and reparation.

- A historian from Argentina, commenting on the "new feminism" compared our time with the 4th century, the end of an empire. They sensed a similar tension, she said, between those who rejected pagan culture, and those who looked to the pagan culture in order to prepare a "New Synthesis."

Challenges to the Church: A New Synthesis?

Can a "new synthesis" be achieved? Can the Catholic Church create a "new feminism" which will truly advance the "New Evangelization"? This will be difficult, considering the

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Vatican Conference — Continued from page 11

almost impenetrable complexity of the challenge.

There appear to be four basic categories that need serious analysis and action, although they are much intertwined. On each of these there is wide range of opinion among Catholics—and there is no unanimity among Catholic women on these issues, as this conference revealed.

1. How *Christians* should approach social and moral problems (e.g. poverty, ignorance, violence, disease, exploitation, homosexuality, family breakdown, abortion, etc.) both in the secular world and within the Church;

2. The position of the laity within the Catholic Church as an institution (e.g. official positions, liturgical roles, etc.);

3. How to engage in active witness in the Church's mission of Evangelization, which includes transmitting the essential teachings of the Catholic faith—doctrinal as well as social—to family, the community, the world;

4. The theological and anthropological basis for both diversity and equality between men and women.

These are ordinarily presented as “women's concerns,” but in reality, they affect everyone. And only the last category has been thoroughly addressed, notably in the works of Pope John Paul II. But the *application* of this teaching about the distinction between and complementarity of the sexes, what this means, and how (or whether) our sex influences (or determines) a person's response or action to the “universal call to holiness,” requires further attention.

It seems obvious that social action “for the advancement of women”—even when such action is consistent with Church teaching—is at best only one aspect of the responsibility of Catholic women. If it is true, as more than one Pope has said, that the world is now “entrusted to women” in a special way, this entrustment certainly means something other than promoting “women's rights.” Essential to this entrustment, as John Paul II has strongly emphasized, is self-giving love—and *self-giving* is the exact opposite of *self-empowerment*.

This distinction between the fundamentally self-centered goals of feminism and the goal of imitating the self-giving love of Christ to which every one of his followers—male and female—is *equally called*, needs to be made more emphatic.

This is especially important in the wake of the past several years of UN conferences on women. The very recent revival in the US of the Equal Rights Amendment, long thought a dead issue, is indicative of the urgent need for the Catholic Church's unambiguous witness.

That this Vatican conference sought to examine key and controversial issues facing Catholic women today, and to provide Church teaching on these issues in a positive light, was a hopeful sign. But the conference also made clear that genuine consensus on some essential matters cannot yet be reached. So

long as this situation of confusion and disunity persists about the meaning of Catholicism, any “new synthesis” of Catholicism with feminism will remain elusive.

More Challenges for Catholics

One reason for this confusion is that so far there seems to be a deep reluctance to engage in the kind of critical analysis of feminism which would be necessary if, indeed, any feminist movement truly faithful to Catholic teaching can be established. Leaving aside for the moment whether it is really possible to create a counter-movement which would supplant the old, serious problems must be faced squarely before they can be resolved.

Resolving problems will be difficult, of course—as this conference showed quite plainly. Since all the women were Catholic leaders chosen by the Vatican, it was very disappointing that it could not be assumed that they accept Catholic doctrine without exception.

The divisions among these women mirror the situation within the Church, and merely underscores the need to come to grips with the problems which are dividing Christians, dividing the Church, dividing women from men and women from women. To neglect this necessary if unpleasant task, to skip over this step in our rush to find a workable solution will

be like putting a coat of white paint over a termite-ridden house. It will not work. You simply *must* get rid of the termites first, or you'll lose the house.

The “Genius of Men”

Another factor, although it seems taboo to allude to this, is the fact that many men who are very capable analysts, wise and insightful critics, are simply not addressing feminism as forthrightly and critically as they should. Some men seem to feel that they have to pull their punches when they are in a battle of ideas with a woman (or women), and downplay or ignore errors that they would not otherwise tolerate.

There may also be an element of fear operative here—about being labeled by feminists a “patriarchal oppressor,” and having their work thus discredited. This apparent inhibition of men to speak critically about feminism may intend to be gentlemanly, protective of (some) women's feelings. Sometimes it can be charming. But it may also (unintentionally, surely) be condescending to women. If they truly regarded women as “equal,” wouldn't this imply that women are equally capable of being objective and reasonable, of receiving criticism without becoming hysterical? (Without question, some members of our sex take unfair advantage of the uneasiness of their male peers to engage in any sort of combat with women!) Whatever their reasons for avoiding conflict over feminism, failure of men to deal with the issues head-on dilutes the

Continued on page 16

**We must distinguish
between *self-centered*
goals of feminism and the
self-giving love of Christ
to which all Christians are
equally called.**

Other voices...

Religion in the news — recent reports

A judge has dismissed a suit by **Sister Carmel McEnroy** against St. Meinrad's School of Theology in Indiana, claiming sex discrimination because she was fired for having signed a public statement calling for the ordination of women. The judge ruled that the dispute is an internal church matter and that it would violate the separation of church and state for the courts to intervene.



Archbishop William J. Levada of San Francisco reached a "compromise" with the city of San Francisco over the issue of spousal benefits for homosexual partners of archdiocesan employees.

When **Mayor Willie Brown** announced that henceforth all institutions doing business with the city would be required to pay benefits to employees' homosexual companions, Archbishop Levada stated that, as a matter of principle, the archdiocese would refuse to comply. There was a storm of criticism, and a week later it was announced that the archdiocese will allow each employee to designate one person in his or her household to receive such benefits, regardless of that person's relationship to the employee.

The agreement will apparently also obligate the archdiocese to pay benefits to unmarried heterosexual partners of employees. Archbishop Levada has said that he expects the settlement to be a model for similar agreements in other cities.

Through Catholic Charities and other institutions, the archdiocese receives millions of dollars in city money which it uses to fund charitable activities. Mayor Brown had threatened to cut off those funds if the archdiocese did not comply.



When **Vice-President Albert Gore** accused groups which oppose contraception of being responsible for abortions in the United States, Cardinal Mahony wrote to the vice-president protesting his anti-Catholicism and chiding him for invoking the name of Cardinal Bernardin in support of his position. In late March Cardinal Mahony announced that, after a month, he had received no response from Gore.



Cardinal Roger Mahony, in his annual Lenten message, asked Los Angeles Catholics to "stop judging and condemning others," citing publications, radio and television programs, and public demonstrations as places of bitter internecine attacks by

some Catholic groups against others.

Shortly thereafter, one of the invited speakers at the Los Angeles archdiocese's annual catechetical institute, Jesuit **Father Thomas Rausch**, strongly attacked certain Catholic writers by name, singling out **Scott Hahn**, **Peter Kreeft**, **Thomas Howard**, and **Karl Keating**. Father Rausch accused them of distorting Catholic teaching by a "fundamentalist" approach to Scripture and to doctrines like the Real Presence. Endorsing the late **Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's** Common Ground project, Father Rausch nonetheless told Los Angeles Catholic teachers that people like those he named should be excluded from participation.



Louise Iushewitz, a member of the Womens' Ordination Conference, has stated publicly that "God in her infinite mercy has given me an inordinate amount of intelligence and insight, so that I am aware that my adversaries are fearful, petty little men, clinging desperately to the driftwood of their power."



Louis Hagget of Framingham (Mass.) has started *Rent a Priest*, which advertises the services of priests who have resigned or been dismissed from the priesthood. He reports receiving requests from all over the country, often from priests in good standing, looking for assistance.



Father Timothy Stein, editor of the Altoona-Johnstown (Pennsylvania) diocesan newspaper, regaled readers with his enthusiastic account of the musical *Falsettos*, about a "family" made up of a divorced couple, the husband's male lover, several lesbians, etc. Father Stein was taken with the show's view that families are not "determined by biology" but come together out of "choice." The play does not make a judgment about homosexuality, divorce, or other "perceived threats to family values," the editor assured his readers.



On Holy Thursday, the **Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee** was charged with racketeering as part of an \$11.7 million lawsuit filed by investors who lost millions in a land-apartment project sponsored by the bishop.

From the Mailroom...

WFF welcomes letters from our readers, and we read them all with care. Too many are received to print them all, but we print as many as possible.

Request from Lithuania

My name is Christine; I am 18 years old. I live in a small town, called Panevezys, in Lithuania. In our town there is one church where young people are gathering. Even in a church we can see the great influence from America. Bad influence, I can say.

When our country separated from Russia and got our independence (1991), we began to communicate with European countries. The influence that we get from other countries is not very good (TV shows and movies, magazines and other publications). Our people, mostly young, are trying to be like people from TV. America is "god" here and the word "America" means sex, narcotics and killing. I can say, Lithuania's youth is getting down. Young people are "taking" everything that's coming from USA through the movies and publications like a real way of life. Are there any Catholic clubs, or some other ways young people can communicate with people in America? Maybe you can advise some books or magazines to translate, which can be interesting for young people? Or maybe you can send some addresses of young Catholic persons (age 14-25). Or maybe you have something to advise to us? I want to show to the young people from my town, that there are Catholics in USA. Maybe it will influence them, that they are living wrong ways. I want to show that God is alive everywhere (in America and in Lithuania).

Christine Batoutyte
Lithuania

Suggestions for good Catholic publications that would interest young people may be sent to WFF, and we will forward them to Christine.

Faith and Family in Hong Kong

I am the associate pastor in an international parish in Hong Kong. We have

many young families and a low divorce rate. Men (and a few women) are assigned for 2-3 years, although some stay longer, and bring their families with them. Because of corporate down-sizing, these branch managers are busier than ever. I tell them: "When you go on a business trip, the hotel may know the location of a Catholic Church, even in China. If you cannot get to Mass, spend an hour with your Bible or Rosary." Thus they can pray on Sunday, but still, as you say on p. 2 of the December 1996 issue of VOICES, such "fathers are often absent - missing from the family and missing from churches." Could corporate downsizing be part of the problem?

About a year ago an advertising expert said: "It is difficult to make a TV commercial which will hold the attention of a teenager for 30 seconds." That remark got me depressed. How will they listen to my 8 or 10 minute homily?

One good thing about raising children in Hong Kong is the ethnic mix here. The English language international schools are a great environment for vaccinating against racial prejudice. We have a good number of Eurasian children in the parish, and many of the couples who come to me for pre-Cana instruction are of different races. I ask them about cultural adjustment and the reaction of their future in-laws. ... As far as the Sacrament of Matrimony is concerned, Holy Mother Church is totally color blind.

In the Lord Jesus,
Rev. Michael J. Sloboda, M.M.

P.S. If you print this in VOICES, please note that these are my personal views, not the official stance of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. Thank you!

Double our efforts

"Just Say No" doesn't work. It is typical of Americans to have a horrible problem and think they can solve it with a slogan and a bumper sticker. Shocking

new reports show that teen drug use has doubled in 4 years. Also that teen suicides have gone up nearly 100 times in a generation and that teen violent crime is at an all-time high. Most people are horrified but say they can do nothing and go back to gazing at the boob tube.

However, William Bennett and other experts say youth with religion are not likely to do these things. We must redouble our efforts to teach the faith to them. Our faith is Christ. We are to introduce the young to Christ. One good way is Gospel reading. We meet Christ when we read the Gospel. Urge teens to read it for night prayers, even if only a couple of paragraphs a day, and think about it. To meet Jesus is to follow him.

Our school has a pamphlet, "I Knew Jesus," in which St. John the Apostle tells about meeting Jesus and walking with him. It is a good introduction to Gospel reading.

Father Rawley Myers
22 W. Kiowa
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Faithful Women

These 10 signatures are from patients at the Shores Nursing Home Rosary Group. They understand the threats to the Church and are staunchly loyal to the Holy Father. Their handicaps in some cases make their signatures difficult.

Thank you and bless you.
The Volunteers
Wisconsin

St. Maria Goretti Materials

St. Maria Goretti, canonized June 24, 1950, lived in a small Italian town at the turn of the century. She was attacked by a boy who lived nearby, but when she resisted him he stabbed her, and she soon died. While on her deathbed, this young girl forgave her attacker. Since then several miracles have been attributed to St. Maria.

The Friends of St. Maria Goretti are promoting devotion to this young saint of our century. A video, book and pamphlets are available.

If you wish to find out more write:
Friends of St. Maria Goretti
P.O. Box 0043
Maryknoll, NY 10545-0043

New from WFF — Card for Memorial Donations

Many readers have requested that their donations to WFF be received as a memorial to a friend or relative.

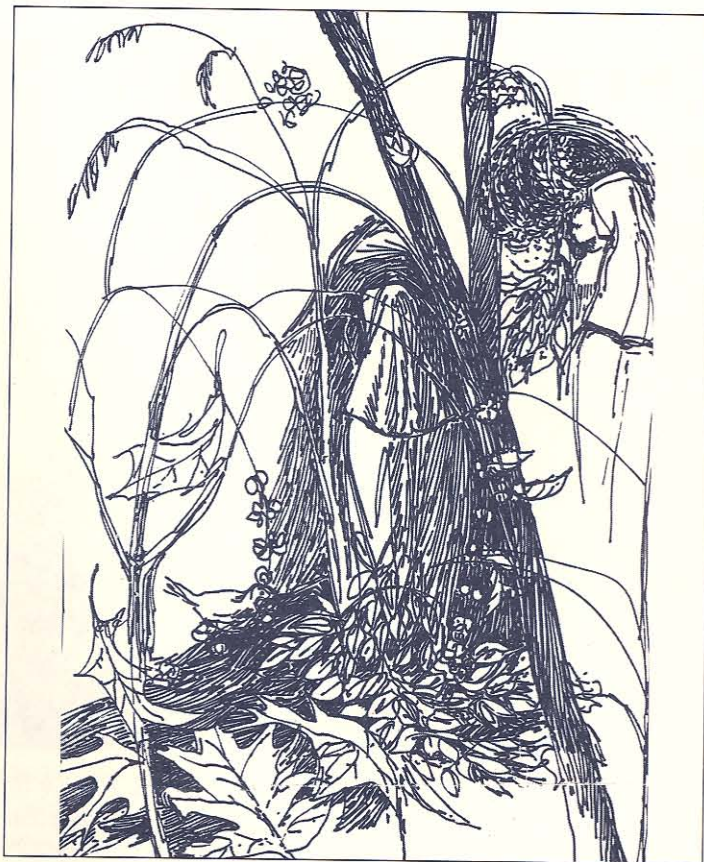
As a new optional service to our donors who request it, we now have available a special acknowledgement card to be sent to the family of the person in whose memory the donation is made.

The card, illustrated at right, features an original ink drawing by WFF staff member, Phyllis Mees, and is printed on heavy white laid paper with matching envelope. Our mailroom staff will hand-write a message that your memorial gift was received. (We can also arrange for a Mass to be said, if you wish). The memorials will appear in the *In Memoriam* section of *Voices*.

To make sure we have all the correct information, you may use the donation form below, or send a separate note.

Blank cards suitable for any use may also be ordered. A donation of \$10.00 for a packet of 6 cards with matching envelopes is suggested.

Requests and donations should be sent to WFF— PO Box 8326, St. Louis, MO 63132.



Flannery O'Connor— The Trouble with Tenderness

ONE OF THE TENDENCIES OF OUR AGE is to use the suffering of children to discredit the goodness of God, and once you have discredited his goodness, you are done with him. The Aylmers whom Hawthorne saw as a menace have multiplied. Busy cutting down human imperfection, they are making headway also on the raw material of good.

Ivan Karamazov cannot believe, as long as one child is in torment; Camus' hero cannot accept the divinity of Christ, because of the massacre of the innocents. In this popular pity, we mark our gain in sensibility and our loss of vision. If other ages felt less, they saw more, even though they saw with the blind, prophetic, unsentimental eye of acceptance, which is to say, of faith.

In the absence of this faith now, we govern by tenderness. It is a tenderness which, long since cut off from the person of Christ, is wrapped in theory. When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness its logical outcome is terror. It ends in forced-labor camps and in the fumes of the gas chamber.

from "A Memoir of Mary Ann"
in *Mystery and Manners*

Dear Women for Faith & Family.

Enclosed is my donation of \$25. \$50. \$100.

Other: \$_____.

Please make my donation a MEMORIAL TO:

NAME _____

Please DO/DO NOT send MEMORIAL CARD TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please DO/DO NOT request a memorial Mass to be said.

Please send me 6 12 Other _____ blank cards
(Circle choice. Suggested donation: \$10. for 6 cards with envelopes.)

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR ADDRESS: _____

Please make checks payable to Women for Faith & Family

WFF is a registered non-profit organization. Your donation may be tax-deductible.



WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY ST. LOUIS STAFF—NOVEMBER 1996

From left: Cindy Haehnel, Susan Benofy, Jocelyn Johnson, Joan Maschmann; (seated) Helen Hull Hitchcock, Sherry Tyree; Dorothy Flake, Jeanette Maschmann, Phyllis Mees. (Photo by David Sponseller)

Vatican Conference—Continued from page 12

effectiveness of their critique.

Partly because of this reluctance of men to deal honestly and justly with feminist errors, it is important that articulate Catholic women who are able to do so, be willing to serve the Church by picking up our share of the burden on this difficult issue. (It is true, of course, that any woman who dares to criticize feminism will hardly be welcomed or “affirmed” by women wedded to this ideology, either; nor should she expect much visible support even from those she defends, including priests and bishops. But that is the nature of the conflict.)

It is not yet apparent precisely in what way the particular gifts and insights of women, as distinct from men, may be made most useful to the Church’s mission today, given the extraordinary cultural upheaval we are now experiencing, and considering great divergence of opinion among Catholic women.

It is clear that these differences are not merely matters of

strategy or method, but involve critical issues involving the very essence of the Catholic faith and the meaning of human life itself.

Radical differences among women over fundamental issues makes the idea that applying “feminine genius” might be the answer to many of the world’s problems seem overly optimistic.

But if the “genius of women,” linked to motherhood, selfless nurturing qualities and receptivity to God’s plan, is needed by the Church and the world today, equally so is the “genius of men”, linked to fatherhood, sacrifice for and protection of others, wise leadership and decisive action. Their two kinds

The “geniuses” of men and women are complementary—a “unity of the two” that cannot be separated...

of “geniuses” are complementary, a “unity of the two” that cannot be separated without endangering both—thus all humanity, beginning with the family.

The Church’s call is universal and applies equally to all Christians—men and women alike—to respond with wisdom and renewed energy to a world in need of every gift and talent of every person, to give their best efforts to the Church and to the world.



voices

Women for Faith & Family

P.O. Box 8326, St. Louis, MO 63132

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