

voices voices voices



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**IMPORTANT!
VOICES
READER SURVEY**

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Bishops, Feminists and the "Women's Pastoral" —

The Final Solution?

When the National Conference of Catholic Bishops finally voted on the fourth and final draft of the ill-starred effort to write a pastoral on "women's concerns", after hours of intense debate, complicated parliamentary maneuvers, last-minute strategy sessions, and sudden shifts of position, most people — including many of the bishops themselves — were confused. In fact, few seemed entirely certain of what had happened or how, except the delegations from leftist feminist groups—who declared victory and left the ballroom of the Omni-Shorham Hotel to go pop some champagne corks for the benefit of the media immediately after the bishops voted (185-51) to issue the draft merely as a report of the ad hoc writing committee to the Executive Committee of the NCCB "for further study..."

Was the outcome of the controversy over the women's pastoral a victory for feminists? Did it represent "the dawn of a new age for feminist Catholics" as claimed by Sister Maureen Fiedler, representing the coalition of radical groups, Catholics Speak Out? Will the Catholic Church "be ordaining women within five years" as Ruth Fitzpatrick of the Women's Ordination Conference immediately predicted?

Many news stories interpreted the pastoral's failure to achieve the required two-thirds majority to approve it as showing a lack of resolve on the part of at least the 110 American bishops who voted against the draft to affirm central Catholic doctrine on ordination. Many accounts claim this was a great victory for feminist reformers within the Church.

However, these extravagant claims are not supported by the facts — as the reporters would have very soon learned, had they not been so eager to follow the feminists' champagne trail.

Bishops Reaffirm Doctrine of Priesthood — 230 - 3

If they had remained only a short while longer, reporters would have seen the bishops give resounding — almost unanimous — approval to a new Program for Priestly Formation, the central and foundational chapter of which is a ringing affirmation and explanation of Catholic doctrine on ordination to the priesthood.

(Result of ballot: 230-3.)

This Program, in preparation since 1988, makes strong use of Pope John Paul II's *Pastores Dabo Vobis* ("I will give you shepherds", March, 1992); and it gives any bishop a blueprint for revitalizing his seminary. The PPF was the work of the NCCB Committee on Priestly Formation, now headed by Archbishop Daniel Buechlein of Indianapolis, who succeeded Bishop James Keleher (Belleville). Other members of the Priestly Formation committee are Bishops Elden Curtiss (Helena), John Marshall (Burlington, VT), Enrique San Pedro, SJ (Brownsville TX), Terry Steib (aux. St. Louis), John Vlazny (Winona), and Donald Wuerl (Pittsburgh).

Plan to 'continue the process' in Women's Committee thwarted.

After their June meeting, at which the third draft was debated (see VOICES, Vol VII, No.2-3, August 1992), it had become clear that that draft did not have enough support for approval. Hastily a fourth draft was issued, incorporating the suppressed "minority report" of two ad hoc committee members, Archbishop William Levada (Portland, OR) and Bishop Alfred Hughes (aux., Boston), and reflecting Vatican criticisms.

The new draft further angered feminists (including a few vocal bishops) who had already been outspoken in their opposition to all the earlier drafts. One of the most angry was Bishop Francis Murphy (aux., Baltimore.) Bishop Murphy, one of six bishops who had participated in the "dialogues" with feminist women beginning in 1977 which precipitated writing the pastoral, voiced his opposition to the fourth draft using exactly the same metaphor (a coat buttoned wrong) with which he had dismissed the first draft.

Several bishops issued statements publicly dissenting from Church teaching on ordination in the weeks following the June meeting; and with feminist activist groups (the coalition "Catholics Speak Out" included the Women's Ordination Conference, WATER, National Coalition of American Nuns, Priests for Equality, New Ways Minis-

try) began a concerted effort to shift the focus of the controversy to women's ordination. Realizing the pastoral, even in its revised form, was extremely unlikely to gain enough support to pass, the coalition's strategy was to conduct an intense campaign for its defeat, claiming the draft's inevitable failure would signal the American bishops' support for feminist dissent — or at the very least, their lack of resolve to defend Church teaching. The coalition solicited funds and signatures for two ads (one supporting homosexual "rights"; the other on the pastoral) which ran in the *National Catholic Reporter* in the weeks preceding the November meeting. (They cast their nets very widely in solicitation. Members of Women for Faith & Family received their mailings.)

Meanwhile, several bishops had published statements of dissent from Catholic teaching on ordination. Among them were Bishops P. Francis Murphy, Kenneth Untener (Saginaw), and Michael Kenny (Juneau), all well known for their support of feminist causes.

Significantly, the pre-conference plan of feminist bishops to remand *all* the drafts — along with other information collected during the nine-year-long "listening process" — to the bishops standing Committee on Women in Society and in the Church was thwarted by efforts of mainstream bishops. The idea was to assure that the process of "study and dialog" implementation the pastoral's recommendations by issuing a series of pastoral statements would continue within the Committee on Women. The first in the proposed series was the statement on "domestic violence" issued by the Women's Committee a few weeks before the November meeting. (The Women's Committee has been headed by one of the most outspoken supporters of feminist "reform" of the Church, Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester. Although Bishop Clark remains a member, Bishop John Snyder of St. Augustine now replaces him as chairman.)

The "Bernardin Plan"

Three past presidents of the NCCB and current members of the Administrative Committee, Cardinal Joseph

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WFF and 'Women's Pastoral' — A Chronology

- **1977 - 1983** — Dialogues between feminist groups and six bishops.
- **June, 1983** — Bishop Michael McAuliffe [Jefferson City] proposes writing pastoral letter on women at NCCB meeting; bishops decide to initiate process.
- **June, 1984** — Ad hoc writing committee for pastoral, Bishops Joseph Imesch (Chariman), Matthew Clark, Amadee Proulx, Thomas Grady, Alfred Hughes and William Levada assigned to the project; initiate "listening sessions."
- **September 8, 1984** — Women for Faith & Family organizes, circulates Affirmation for Catholic Women, responding to bishops' request to hear from Catholic women.
- **February 28, 1985** — WFF sends letter to writing committee noting that 4,544 women had signed the Affirmation statement.
- **June, 1985** — WFF presents 10,000 names of Affirmation signers to the Holy See.
- **August, 1985** — WFF gives 17,000 names, testimony at invitation of the writing committee.
- **September, 1987** — Papal visit to United States. WFF representatives attend meeting of the Pope with lay leaders held in San Francisco.
- **October 10, 1987** — WFF presents list of 40,000 Affirmation signers (including Mother Teresa's) and testimony from Catholic women to Holy See at Synod on the Laity in Rome.
- **April 1, 1988** — First draft of pastoral, "*Partners in the Mystery of Redemption*" issued. WFF writes analysis for several publications.
- **June 5, 1988** — WFF issues joint statement on draft with Consortium Perfectæ Caritatis and Institute on Religious Life.
- **Summer, Fall, 1988** — new round of "listening sessions" conducted. Revised pastoral scheduled for completion, December, 1989.
- **December, 1988** — Pope John Paul II's *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women) issued. *Christifidelis Laici* follows.
- **April 18, 1989** — WFF issues joint "Statement on Feminism, Language and Liturgy" with CPC, IRL.
- **April 3, 1990** — Second draft released, "*One in Christ Jesus.*"
- **June 1, 1990** — WFF issues critique of draft to all bishops; calls on bishops to find acceptable alternative to approving pastoral.
- **September 1, 1990** — WFF issues commentary, analysis, recommendations on pastoral draft.
- **November, 1990** — Bishop Imesch reports to NCCB meeting on Vatican consultation; says the pastoral is "for the *American Church*, not the universal Church" and third draft will be ready for vote in November, 1991.
- **November 29, 1990** — At "Wisdom of Women" symposium sponsored by USCC/NCCB Committees on Women, Bishop Clark calls for "dialogue" on ordination of women, birth control, election of bishops by clergy and laity.
- **February 2, 1991** — WFF sends lists of signers of Affirmation (approx. 45,000 in U.S.) to individual U.S. bishops. Only Ronda Chervin and Sr. Sara Butler remain of the original 5 women consultants to the writing committee.
- **May 28-29, 1991** — Vatican consultation with bishops from around the world on the U.S. bishops' second draft. WFF responds.
- **April 3, 1992** — Third draft issued, "*Called to be One in Christ Jesus.*"
- **June 1, 1992** — WFF issues Commentary on Third Draft to all bishops, including WFF and CPC's Joint Statement critical of draft.
- **June 18, 1992** — First discussion of the pastoral at meeting of NCCB. WFF publishes transcript.
- **September 15, 1992** — Fourth draft issued, "*One in Christ Jesus—Gal 3:28.*"
- **October 19, 1992** — WFF sends Comments on fourth draft to all bishops.
- **November 17, 18, 1992** — Final debate and vote on the pastoral at fall meeting of NCCB.
- **December 31, 1992** — Final version: "*One in Christ Jesus: Toward a Pastoral Response to Women's Concerns*" issued as Ad Hoc Committee Report to NCCB Executive Committee printed in *Origins*.

Bishops and the Pastoral

Continued from page 2

Bernardin (Chicago), Archbishop John Roach (Minneapolis/St. Paul, member of the Women's Committee), and Bishop James Malone (Youngstown, OH) actively supported a strategy to continue the pastoral process and the issuance of statements within the Women's Committee. (Committee statements do not require the approval of the entire conference.) They hoped to circumvent the normal debate and vote on the pastoral at the beginning of the discussion by moving that it be remanded to Committee.

As the discussion of the pastoral began on Tuesday, Cardinal Bernardin introduced a carefully worded motion calling for the draft to be remanded to committee where it would be used for "study and dialog" and the implementation of the twenty-five recommendations at the end of the draft.

Because of parliamentary rules governing the process, a vote had to be taken on the Bernardin motion before any further discussion or amendment of the draft pastoral could ensue. Archbishop Levada asked the Cardinal to withdraw his motion, but he refused. The bishops were required, then, to focus their discussion on the Cardinal's motion, and could not amend the draft, or debate the issues it raised, or vote on it while the motion was on the floor. All further discussion of the draft would end if the Bernardin motion passed.

It was overwhelmingly clear from the interventions of the bishops who spoke in favor of the Cardinal's motion that his supporters were those bishops most outspoken in their dissent from Church doctrine and discipline. Cardinal Bernardin's supporters included Archbishops Rembert Weakland and John Roach; Bishops James Malone, Michael Kenny, Francis Murphy, Raymond Lucker (New Ulm), Peter Rosazza (aux. Hartford), and Walter Sullivan (Richmond).

Opponents of the Bernardin Plan included writing-committee members, Archbishop Levada and Bishop Alfred Hughes, and others of the most vocal in promoting fidelity to Church teachings.

At the very beginning of Wednesday morning's session, however, Cardinal Bernardin withdrew his motion. Whatever influenced this unexpected change of mind, in his speech withdrawing his motion the Cardinal emphasized that his motion was not to be understood as challenging Church teaching; but rather a call for further study, reflection, etc., in order that the Church's doctrines might be better understood.

Debate and vote on the pastoral draft ensued. It was

generally presumed that Cardinal Bernardin would later reintroduce his motion (which could then be amended) if the draft failed to pass. That this possibility was constantly kept in mind was evident by the intervention of several bishops during the discussion of the draft.

Nobody was surprised at the outcome of the ballot: the pastoral failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority for passage (137 yes—110 no). Cardinal Bernardin, as anticipated, reintroduced a motion which was then amended. An important addition to Cardinal Bernardin's motion was that any statements of any committee on any of the issues "*conform to the teaching of the Church*" as contained in the fourth draft. The motion passed (185-51), thus determining the fate of the fourth draft — and the many years of controversy over its writing trailed to a close.

The fourth draft — *and this draft only* — with the amendments agreed upon during the bishops' discussion, was to be issued as a report of the *ad hoc* writing committee (the "Imesch committee") to the Executive Committee (*not* to the Women's Committee). The Executive Committee could then assign to other appropriate committees to address the particular topics in the 25 recommendations.

Reduced to a committee report, now called "*One in Christ Jesus — Toward a Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women for Church and Society*", the amended document appeared in the bishops' official publication, *Origins* (Vol. 22: No. 29) on December 31. It is described in the current USCC publications catalog as "defeated as a pastoral letter but approved as a working paper to be used for action on the document's 25 recommendations and for further study and dialog."

Draft's demise deals blow to feminists...

Although the changes in the fourth draft had been great improvements over earlier drafts (it contained explicit teaching on the priesthood and on issues of sexual morality) it still retained serious flaws. Some of these problems were enumerated in Women for Faith & Family's *Observations on the Fourth Draft*, sent to all bishops October 19, the Feast of the Jesuit martyr, St. Isaac Jogues. These *Observations* are reprinted elsewhere in this issue.

The final disposition of the pastoral was the best possible fate it could meet, under the circumstances. The outcome of this protracted skirmish in the continuing war of feminism against the Catholic Church must be viewed as a defeat for the party of reform who had initiated "dialogue" between bishops and feminists in 1977.

Key objectives of the pastoral's "process" failed. Feminists failed not only to achieve the priesthood, but they failed to persuade more than a few bishops even to question this teaching. They failed to compel the bishops or the Vatican to consider ordaining women to the diaconate. They did not even gain the bishops' official support in the symbolically important issue of "altar girls" — and this after strenuous efforts of at least fifteen years. And it must be remembered, only hours after the demise of the pastoral draft, the bishops almost unanimously approved the new Program for Priestly Formation which explained at length the sacramental meaning of ordination.

But the error persists.

What do the confusing events surrounding the demise of the pastoral signify, and how will the future of the Catholic Church in America be affected?

The long war will certainly continue. The tens of millions of aborted babies are the most visible victims of the disastrous and bloody war ideological feminism is waging against Christ's truth embodied in the Catholic Church. And the *eternal* lives of millions more are imperiled whenever this ideology is given credibility within the Church, by her priests and bishops, or by her worship.

One example is the effort to "politically correct" the language of Catholic worship according to feminist prin-

ciples. This is explicitly intended to change the belief of the Church. Although some bishops have become alarmed at the harm these politicized revisions inevitably cause, much damage has already been done. And there is still more to come.

The Committee on Marriage and Family, headed by Cardinal Bernardin (NCCB) and Dolores Leckey (USCC), is drafting a pastoral letter on the family this year. The first draft is due in November, 1993. Feminist theologian Lisa Sowle Cahill is a consultant to the committee on the theology of the "Domestic Church." This merits concern.

As the feminists' shouts of victory at the defeat of the women's pastoral are still ringing in our ears, we can be certain of this much: they will not retire from the battlefield — and neither must we. Feminism has inflicted and will continue to inflict deep wounds both in the Church and in society. Although the vigorous and visible witness of many thousands of faithful Catholic women made it impossible for feminists to continue their claim to speak for all women — all Catholic women — the bishops may now have an even greater need to hear the voices of Catholic men and women who are steadfast in their faith, and who will unfailingly support the Church's teachings and will encourage bishops in their critically important task of guiding the Church through the confusion of this dark and troubled time. ◇

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Is this your first issue of VOICES? Will it be your last?

Women for Faith & Family has made *your* voices heard — to our Bishops and to many others in the United States and abroad. A major means of doing this is through VOICES. We would *like* to send VOICES without charge to all Catholic women who have signed the **Affirmation for Catholic Women**, but there are more than 40,000 of you in the United States alone, and more than 10,000 in other countries — and the number keeps growing. Many women are counting on us to speak for them, and for important news and helpful articles. But some have limited means and simply cannot afford a regular subscription fee. We do not want to exclude them. We also want to continue to send VOICES to you.

If this is your first copy of VOICES — or the first in several years — won't you please return the enclosed envelope and tell us that you want to stay on our active mailing list? Your tax-exempt donation of \$25.00 would make a very big difference in what we can do for you. But please send whatever you can to help pay for your issues of VOICES — and add a little extra for someone else who cannot. (Of course, if you do not want to receive further issues, we'd like to know that, too.)

Please help us! And please be as generous as you can. Your donations are our *only* means of support — for VOICES and for all the other many efforts on your behalf of our dedicated volunteer staff.

Thank you — and God bless you!

Observations of Women for Faith & Family on “One in Christ Jesus” the Fourth Draft of the “Women’s Pastoral”

FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS Women for Faith & Family has explicitly supported the bishops’ effort to write a pastoral on “women’s concerns”. Despite our concern and disappointment with the drafts, we have persisted in both our critiques and our encouragement. We have been aware that there is great confusion within the Church, as well as outside it, about critical matters of Catholic doctrine and dogma. Both within the Church and in society the perennial teachings of the Catholic Church have been challenged on nearly every issue involving women and their roles within the family, in society and in the Church.

We have been encouraged to see in the fourth pastoral draft a broadened focus, an attempt to be more a response to mainstream concerns, unrestricted by the narrow perspective of radical feminism which has predominated in all the other drafts. The shift in focus in the new draft is marked. Clearly many bishops understand their responsibility in teaching the Catholic faith, even when it is “counter-cultural” or unpopular with some elements in the Church and society.

Some specific observations

1. We agree with the statement that “To identify sexism as the principal evil at work in this distortion of relationships between men and women would be to analyze the underlying problem too superficially.”

We welcome the newly added sections explaining the nature of the Church, the priesthood and Mary [¶¶ 114-140]. This is much needed teaching which many Catholic people have never really heard. The current draft cites feminist “questions of justice” about the ordained priesthood [¶133], and subordinate liturgical roles [¶109], yet explicitly affirms that any “continuing reflection” on the meaning of the offices of the diaconate, lector, acolyte and servers at the altar must be undertaken in the context of “respect for the authority and of the magisterium of the church” [¶132].

2. The sections on sexuality and family life have been improved by the addition of paragraphs on natural family planning [¶¶84, 85] and chastity [¶¶94, 95].

3. Although “sexism” is no longer presented as the single “sin” from which all injustice flows, the new draft still contains no genuine critique of the errors of feminist ideology; no warning to readers about the feminist/liberationist agenda for the Church and society. We believe such a critique is essential.

- a) Feminism has divided not only the Church but the culture, as well, notably in its militant advocacy of sexual “liberation” and abortion. This situation should be acknowledged and critically evaluated.
- b) The role of feminism in the demolition of women’s religious orders and virtual decimation of their apostolic work is still ignored in the new draft.
- c) Also ignored is the promotion of an alien and quasi-pagan “feminist spirituality”, spread among vulnerable women who believe themselves to be “alienated” and oppressed by the Church. Too often these workshops and “liturgies” are given by priests and women religious, and too often they are sponsored by parishes, religious communities, and Catholic schools or institutions. This deserves attention.
- d) Retained from earlier drafts is the issue of language [¶157, footnote 94]. It should be deleted from this draft. This issue, although of central importance to the feminist agenda, involves far more than inconsequential matters of style or the comfort of a few women. In fact, the language question concerns matters of great importance to the Catholic faith, and is now under scrutiny as a result of the proposed revision of the Roman Missal and several scripture translations, as well as because of unauthorized liturgical innovations to incorporate feminist language.

4. The 25 recommendations at the end of the pastoral are little changed from earlier drafts. They contain problematic (and frequently inconsistent) suggestions for social policy thought to benefit women. The feminist perspective still dominates these recommendations.

- a) The recommended establishment of “women’s commissions” in all the dioceses remains a matter of great concern. There is no reason to suppose that this would not increase already cumbersome and unhelpful bureaucracy, and there is every reason to believe that such commissions are intended to further increase the influence of an elite group of feminist professional Church workers.
- b) Still missing from the list of recommendations is that the resources of the USCC/NCCB be employed to promulgate the great body of critically important papal documents on the very issues the

pastoral raises. Among them, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, *Familiaris Consortio*, *Christifidelis Laici*, and *Redemptoris Missio*, all of which contain fundamental teachings on the most crucial issues of our time — especially concerning the roles of women, families and laity in the evangelical mission of the Church.

Some concluding observations

From the time the bishops announced their intention to address these issues involving women, we have maintained that there is a desperate need for clear and courageous teaching from our bishops; although we recognize that such counter-cultural teaching as the Church gives to the world will not elicit praise from the world, and, indeed, may make some or even many Catholics “uncomfortable.” We sympathize with the difficulty this may present for the bishops. We have promised our prayerful support of their efforts to provide this necessary teaching, not only to Catholics, but to the world. We have urged them to persevere, despite the difficulty. We renew our pledge of support, both in prayer and in action, for our bishops and clergy in this necessary work.

We recognize, also, the limits of our ability, as women, whether lay or religious. Our influence within our families, our religious communities, or in the wider community may be — and should be — extended and we should participate in the Church’s mission to bring the liberating truth of Christ’s gospel to the world of our time with renewed vigor, greater understanding and unflinching acceptance of our true vocation as Christians and as Catholics in the common priesthood of all the baptized. But it is the responsibility of our bishops, not us, to guide and to teach the entire Church.

After more than eight years, and four official drafts of the bishops’ pastoral letter on “women’s concerns”, we have seen an increase, rather than a decrease, in confusion about the issues with which the pastoral concerns itself — and other fundamental matters of doctrine and dogma. This confusion afflicts not only laity (influenced, perhaps, by some Catholic theologians) but some bishops.

For example, within the past few weeks and months, there have been public statements by several bishops calling for radical departures from essential teachings of the Church in the matter of ordination. Some of these public statements were evidently made in direct response to the much clearer enunciation, in the fourth draft, of the Church’s unchangeable teaching that the ordained priesthood (as distinct from the common priesthood) may not be “opened” to women. At least one bishop, at a symposium officially sponsored by the NCCB/USCC committees on women, has called for the democratic selection of bishops by the people. Some have called for “dialogue” which would question basic Catholic doctrine on human life issues,

such as contraception, extra-marital sexual activity, abortion and euthanasia. We regard such statements by bishops with sadness, for it reveals a deep estrangement from essential elements of perennial Catholic dogmas involving the very nature and authority of the Church (ecclesiology), of Christ (Christology), of roles for men and women in the Divine Plan (anthropology), on the part even of some who have been given the authority to transmit, to guard, and to protect the both the teaching and the unity of the Church. (The current draft’s definition of “sexism” [see footnote 6] is drawn from a pastoral letter co-authored by one of the bishops who has made public his dissent from Church teaching on the priesthood.)

All of the pastoral drafts have reflected divisions, at the very highest levels of the Church in the United States, over fundamental Church teachings.

This situation causes concern that it may be impossible for the present committee of bishops writing this pastoral letter to attain the necessary clarity of purpose and unity of conviction in order to compose a truly coherent pastoral letter on the critically important subjects it raises.

Whether or not it is possible for the bishops to correct the fourth draft’s problems, or to issue, finally, an authoritative document of sound teaching, one thing is by now clear: the years during which the “pastoral process” has continued have not been years of healing divisions, nor of promoting the integrity of Catholic teaching, nor of promoting unity within the Church, nor of increasing the effectiveness of her mission to the world. In fact, the contrary has taken place.

If the bishops are as yet unable to approve a consistent, clear and helpful pastoral statement, this costly “process” should be discontinued entirely. Implementation of the pastoral’s recommendations should not be pursued. The facilities of the NCCB and the USCC should no longer be used to promote feminist projects (women’s commission workshops, “listening” sessions, production of videos on “women” by the USCC, etc.)

Instead, we should renew our resolve to use every resource, both personal and institutional, to defend and promote and explain the teachings of the Church — in the most powerful and moving way possible. We should get on with the sometimes grindingly difficult, always unglamorous, and usually thankless task of the Church — the task of transmitting the truly liberating Gospel of Salvation in Jesus Christ to our families, to the Church, and to the world.

Women for Faith & Family

Feast of St. Isaac Jogues,
October 19, 1992

The Catholic Family Evangelizing the Culture

Bishop Bruskewitz Keynotes — Bishop Keleher addresses group

Participants from fifteen states attended the eighth annual Women for Faith & Family conference held in St. Louis on October 2, 3 and 4. The conference focused on the evangelizing role of women and families in a culture which is increasingly indifferent to — or even hostile towards — the Catholic faith.

The theme, 'Evangelizing the Culture', commemorated the fifth centenary of Catholic evangelization in the Americas, and emphasized the need to re-evangelize contemporary society through authentic "inculturation" of the gospel.

The Most Rev. Fabian Bruskewitz, appointed bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska, last March, presented the keynote address on Friday evening. Bishop Bruskewitz' address, "Women in Magisterial Teaching," examined the evangelical role of women in the Church and in society in the light of recent papal documents, especially Pope John Paul II's *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 'On the Dignity and Vocation of Women'. (Complete text of this address in this issue.) The bishop's address followed vespers celebrated by **The Rev. Lawrence Brennan**, academic dean of Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis.

Saturday's events began with Mass in the historic "Old Cathedral" of St. Louis with Bishop Bruskewitz as principal celebrant and homilist.

In the first session on Saturday morning, **Dr. Germaine Murray** addressed the conference on "Where Are the Young Catholics?" She spoke of the problems of her generation, whose entire experience of the Church is "post-conciliar," and whose religious formation was often confusing — or virtually non-existent. Basing her talk on her own experience, she stressed the importance of the family and of deeply committed teachers in transmitting basic truths of the faith and she noted the strong influence of elements within contemporary society which are essentially hostile to religious belief, and to the Catholic Church

in particular. Dr. Murray, an English teacher at Maryville College in St. Louis, is a staff member of WFF.

In an address entitled "The Skimpole Syndrome", **The Rev. Paul Mankowski, SJ**, a biblical scholar at Harvard, author of many articles on the contemporary religious scene, and frequent speaker for WFF, used Charles Dickens' charming but narcissistic and parasitic *Bleak House* character, Harold Skimpole, to portray the destructive effects on the Church of those Catholics whose principal goal is to assure their own comfort and to satisfy their private "needs" at the expense of others and in wilful disregard of their own obligations. By demanding continual sacrifices from others for personal gain, such individuals, erode the integrity of the Catholic Church and damage her evangelical mission.

The Most Rev. James Keleher's address, "*Contemplata Tradere*—Sharing Faith", stressed the importance of teaching the faith within the home. The question and answer period following the bishop's talk was lively and informative. Bishop Keleher, of nearby Bishop of Belleville, Illinois, especially honored the conference by bringing his mother.

Dr. Suzanne Scorson, Director of the Office of Family Life, Archdiocese of Toronto, and an anthropologist, by training, spoke to the assembly on "Inculturation: Diversity and Unity in the Body of Christ". Dr. Scorson emphasized the distinction between authentic 'inculturation', or legitimate minor adaptation of Catholic teaching and practice to incorporate certain elements of a local culture which conform to the Church's essential message; and inauthentic 'multiculturalism', which in effect reverses the process, forcing the Catholic faith through the filter of a particular cultural or societal point of view.

Saturday evening's banquet was preceded by vespers, led by **Fr. Ralph Wright, OSB**, of the St. Louis Abbey.

Dr. James F. Hitchcock, Professor of History at St. Louis University, was the banquet speaker. His address, "500 Years of Catholic Evangelization in America", focused on the history of early missionary activity in the Americas and offered insights into the current contro-

versy about Columbus.

At the banquet, the 1992 Women for Faith and Family Award was presented to fathers — spiritual fathers as well as fathers of families. A copy of WFF's Prayer for Fathers was presented to each man present at the dinner. (For a copy of this prayer for your own "Awardee", send a SASE to the WFF office with a request.)

The Rev. James A. Viall spoke Sunday morning on "Evangelization and the Call to Holiness." Father Viall, pastor of St. Rose's Church, Cleveland, was the coordinator of the Consortium Perfectæ Caritatis, an association of women religious recently replaced by the Conference of Major Superiors of Women [CMSW]. He has been a friend and associate of WFF for many years and WFF-Cleveland is based at his parish.

"Catholic Women and the Culture War," was the title of the concluding address, by **Helen Hull Hitchcock**.

The final event of the conference was Mass at the Basilica of St. Louis the King ("The Old Cathedral"). **Father Mankowski** was principal celebrant and homilist (his homily is reprinted in this issue), and **Father Viall**

concelebrated. Servers were seminarians from Kenrick Seminary. **Jennie Sullivan**, representative from the diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota, and **Suzanne Scorsone** were readers.

Production crew from MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour was present at the conference on Sunday morning. **Richard N. Ostling**, Associate Editor of TIME magazine, interviewed some conference participants for a segment on women in the Catholic Church. The show, aired November 11, focused primarily on the controversy surrounding the ordination of women. **Betsy Greenwell** (Corpus Christi), **Mary Kay Culp** (Kansas City), and **Sister Clare Steven, DSP** (St. Louis) appeared.

Women for Faith & Family staff members also appeared in TIME [November 16] in a story by Mr. Ostling on the same subject. Sherry Tyree, Phyllis Mees, Susan Benofy, Germaine Murray and Helen Hitchcock are pictured in the nave of the Old Cathedral.

All conference talks, including homilies from both Masses, are available on audio-cassettes. They may be ordered by telephone, or use form below.

1992 WFF CONFERENCE TAPES

_____ **192** - *Keynote address: Women in Recent Magisterial Documents* — Bishop. Fabian Bruskewitz

_____ **292** - *Where are the Young Catholics?* — Dr. Germaine Murray _____

_____ **392** - *The Skimpole Syndrome* — The Rev. Paul Mankowski, SJ

_____ **492** - *Contemplata Tradere—Sharing Faith* — Bishop James Keleher

_____ **592** - *Inculturation: Diversity and Unity* — Dr. Suzanne Scorsone

_____ **692** - *Five Hundred Years of Catholic Evangelization* — Dr. James Hitchcock

_____ **792** - *Evangelization and the Call to Holiness* — The Rev. James A. Viall

_____ **892** - *Catholic Women and the Culture War* — Helen Hull Hitchcock

_____ **992** - *Homilies from Masses: Saturday a.m.* — Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz;
Sunday a.m. — Rev. Paul Mankowski.

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Women in Magisterial Teaching

IN MY STUDENT DAYS I became a great fan of the writings of the semiticist and archeologist William Foxhall Albright who operated out of Johns Hopkins University. It was his writings, particularly his monograph, *From The Stone Age to Christianity*, that stimulated my interest in biblical archeology, especially the archeology of the Old Testament.

Despite my studies and readings as an amateur in that area, however, I was never psychologically able to grasp, although intellectually I had some convictions about it, how Israel was so easily seduced from its monotheism. Even the most cursory glance at the Old Testament will tell you that in the long journey from Ur of the Chaldees to the New Testament there were innumerable lapses in which encroaching paganism assailed the pure monotheism of Abraham and later of Moses. I think it is only in our day that I was able to have this kind of psychological grasp, an insight into the continuing battle between the purity of monotheism and the polluting of paganism. And that's because I think we are witnessing it in our time.

This centers in a very special way, in my view, on the assault of radical feminism upon the citadel of Christianity. Earlier this week I received the current number of a magazine called *Milwaukee*. It has as its feature article and cover an item by someone called Catherine McCary Miller. It is entitled "Witches" and the subtitle says "Three centuries after the Salem witch hunt, witchcraft is making a revival right here in Milwaukee. Yes, there are cauldrons and full moon rituals, but the practice of witchcraft is far different from what you may imagine."

What strikes me as particularly interesting in this revival of paganism and witchcraft now going on in our country (and not just in Milwaukee) is that it calls to mind the lapses into paganism of large numbers of the Chosen People of the Old Testament. And how often that lapse — like what is going on now — is associated with the rituals and outlooks that one can call the first cousins, brothers, and sisters to the ancient fertility rites. These fertility rites, as elementary archeological manuals will show in Middle-Eastern excavations, involve not only the personification of various forces of nature, but especially the worship of gods and goddesses who are combined — that is, who had androgynous, hermaphroditic characteristics. Albright and the other archeologists have thousands and thousands of amulets and other materials that involve creatures of the imagi-

nation who combine in one image of a human body the characteristics of the masculine and the feminine.

THERE SEEMS TO EXIST in the ancient mind — in the mysteries of fertility, the natural fertility of plants and animals, the mystery of human sexual reproduction and the like — an innate tendency to strive to see within these forces of fertility, hermaphroditism. It seems, in our time, that the intellectual, emotional and spiritual turmoil of these decades have made a field in which this sort of fertility rite grows very rapidly. Sometimes it is masked and sometimes camouflaged with something different. But oftentimes, as in the case of the article in the *Milwaukee* magazine, it makes no attempt to conceal its pagan origins. It has made its entry into our world and unfortunately has lured into its ambit a significant number of believing Christians. This thrives on chaos and disorder.

This new evil, or rather a revival of an old evil, has entered our culture and our civilization with a ferocious vengeance. I think Donna Steichen's *Ungodly Rage* documents the entrance of this new paganism, led by a radical feminist outlook, into our culture, our civilization, and unfortunately into a large portion of the Catholic community.

A lady named Frances Leep, who claims to have written her dissertation on feminist theology at Marquette University and is currently teaching theology at Seton College in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, speaking about witchcraft, says "This wonderful practice resonates with a lot of Catholics because there are common symbols. It is more attractive to women because it is positive and openly affirms the transitions in a woman's life."

Another woman, Julie Dixon Sidel, says she is a "radical Christian neo-pagan with overtones of native American spirituality." This thirty-four year old woman was converted to paganism from Catholicism. She claims that her adult life had been dedicated to "living out the Gospel" in the manner of Christ through the Catholic Worker Movement. But now she and her husband are members of the local chapter the Covenant of Unitarian/Universalist Pagans. This is a group of 20 regular members who operate under the umbrella of the Unitarian Church.

Without subscribing to an imaginary conspiracy theory of history or of neo-paganism in history, I do not think it is farfetched to say that the motivation of a great number of

people, either directly or through manipulation, is far from what it appears to be—in the attempt, for example, to change liturgical language, to change the very word of God and sacred Scripture, and to blasphemously refer to the Deity in terms that are both masculine and feminine, in such a way as to imply the correctness of pagan hermaphroditism, or the correctness of worshipping some kind of false, androgynous god.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO? To confront this revival of paganism, of ancient fertility rites, of evil; to protect the Body of Christ from being violated by the intrusions of this false religion so that not only the First Commandment of the Decalogue, not only the purity of monotheism, but the integrity of Christianity itself might be preserved, in my opinion, it is necessary that we must go—in the midst of this flood, in the midst of this wave of history—to the Rock of Peter. We must return to the magisterial documents of the Church, to consult them and to live them.

The distortions and mutilations of Christianity and, indeed, of culture and civilization, are making faster inroads into our world than we sometimes care to acknowledge. Magisterial documents of the Church are the weapons, the tools, the instruments by which those who are faithful to Christ might stand with Him against the onslaught. There are many of these documents, but those which probably would be held highest in our esteem are the writings of the successors of St. Peter, the Bishops of Rome. From the great and sometimes heroic writings of Pope Paul VI to the writings and spoken interventions of our present Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, we can derive a rich and healthy outlook on the place of men and women in God's plan, and on the place of the family in God's plan; and a profoundly beneficial outlook on the correct way to oppose encroaching paganism with the teachings of Christ and the mightiness of the infallible word of God.

THE ROCK AND HUMUS out of which the evil fungus of neopaganism and radical feminism grows is comprised, in my view, of many elements, not the least of which are decades of continuing dissent in the whole area of Christian sexual morality and Christian life morality; decades of liturgical abuse, some of which is utterly grotesque and aberrant; decades of indifference on the part of many Catholics to what is happening, and particularly on the part of Catholics who hold responsible positions, a tolerance of doctrinal falsehood and religious error.

The old axiom that 'human beings are naturally religious and if they don't have the true religion they will invent a false one of their own making' seems to be verified in our experiences today. Correct religion is unfamiliar to large numbers of people, including, unfortunately, many Catholics. And it leads them to invent a religion of their own making, a religion that

oftentimes is syncretistic and lapses into pagan and heathen ritual.

What is tragically ironic is the fact that many women who have become the leaders of resurgent neopaganism and heathenism (which assail our monotheism and our Christianity) do so in a naïve and simplistic belief that it serves the purposes of their equality and their dignity. Historically, however, it is precisely this sort of pagan and heathen ritual which casts women into totally subservient roles; and which have it made possible for women to be oppressed and enslaved far beyond anything that the current culture — at least in the West — could conceivably tolerate.

In the long and correct view of history, there can be no doubt that Christianity and its doctrines, as authentically presented by the Catholic Church, have been the most liberating instruments for women's equality and dignity in all historic endeavor. Even the most anti-Catholic anthropologist would have to concede that nowhere other than in the Christian West, during the last two millenia, have women been treated

with greater dignity and greater equality. You would have to be extraordinarily prejudiced to see women trying to escape into Cuba or China or Moslem North Africa in order to be equal, or in order to be liberated.

Indeed, in the Christian outlook of a proper family life, one finds that kind of dignity and equality for women which is unavailable in any other culture or any other history or outlook. We should recall perhaps the splendid words of Pope Pius XI speaking of the family. In the context of a properly adjusted family, "the father must be the head of the home and occupy the first place of authority, but the mother must be the heart of the home and occupy the first place in love." In distinction and complementarity in honoring nature, not as it is distorted and soiled by sin but as it comes from the hand of God, the Catholic Church has taken up the defense, in her magisterium, of monotheism, of the rights of women, of the strength of the family, and of the very nature of Christianity.

IT IS INTERESTING TO CONSIDER the words of Pope Paul VI spoken in 1976. He said, "We would recall first of all the fundamental principle of Christianity: God created the human person, man and woman, in a single plan of love. He created the human being in his own image. Men and women, therefore, are equal before God—equal as persons, equal as children of God, equal in dignity, equal also in their rights."

It seems to me extremely important that this fundamental and basic equality, which is now and always has been proclaimed by the Catholic Church in official teaching, be reemphasized, because the enemies of the doctrine of the Church — especially of the doctrine which precludes women from being

**Papal teachings are
our weapons to combat
decades of dissent...
decades of abuse...
decades of indifference...
tolerance of religious error.**

ordained priests — would like to see the Church as contradicting the basic equality of women.

One of the techniques of those who attack the Catholic faith, of those who attack Christianity — the technique of the radical feminists who attack monotheism — is to paint the Church in a posture of indefensible support for basic inequality. It is a tenet of our faith that we should be proud of, that men and women are basically equal — in holiness and sanctity. The whole mystery of God's predestination and prevenient grace is no respecter of gender. This is why St. Paul can say that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male or female", and so on. (Galatians 3:28)

We should remember what Pope Paul VI said:

"We would also like to put you on your guard against certain possible deviations in the contemporary movement for the advancement of women. The equalizing of rights must not degenerate into an egalitarianism and impersonal leveling. Egalitarianism, which is blindly pushed forward by our materialistic society, is little concerned with the specific welfare of persons; and contrary to appearances, it takes no notice of what is suitable and what is not suitable for women. It thereby runs the risk of either virilising women or depersonalizing them. In both cases, it does violence to women's deepest qualities. Egalitarianism can even favor certain forms of hedonism, which are a threat to the spiritual and moral integrity of women and to their purely human dignity."

"Authentic Christian advancement of women," the Pope says, "is not limited to the claiming of rights. The Christian spirit also obliges all of us, both men and women, to remember our proper duties and responsibilities. Today it is especially a question of achieving a greater and closer collaboration between men and women in society and in the Church, in order that all will contribute their individual talents and dynamism for the building up of the world that will not be leveled down to uniformity, but harmoniously unified. The advancement of women, understood in this way, can be a powerful aid to the achievement of union between people to the establishment of peace in the world."

During the last bishops' meeting [June, 1992], Bishop George from Yakima, Washington, said, and I think correctly, that we are all children of John Locke more than we perhaps would like to be. And that this Lockean emphasis on rights above all, and rights to the detriment of all, has distorted immeasurably the basic philosophical outlook that should be ours as Christians and as Catholics.

POPE PAUL VI, in his writings as in other things, proved to be a great prophet. We need only a cursory glance at his great 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* to understand what the Pope foresaw as the inevitable consequence of the disintegration of

Catholic morality in the sexual field. It has now occurred in our time — and even more forcefully and vengefully than the Pope predicted. It is in the area of the advancement of women as well as in the area of sexual morality that the magisterial teaching of the Pope has set about to reinforce the basic and fundamental structure of the family, which is, of course, the basic and fundamental cell of all human society — the building block of Church and State. Culturally, it is only in and through the family that the rescue of our civilization from its steep decline into degradation and degeneration will be effective.

The repeated work of the Pontifical magisterium in regard to the dignity of women, in regard to the defense of Christianity — of the Catholic faith — against the onslaught of neopaganism and materialism and hedonism can also be found in the great speeches and writings of our present Holy Father. Especially I

would like to mention his magnificent exegesis of the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis in his Wednesday audience speeches; and, of course, the great document, *Mulieris Dignitatem* [On the Dignity and Vocation of Women], issued on August 15, 1988.*

These papal works give us tools by which we can labor and work under God's grace for evangelizing our culture — to bring the good news of Christ even to the dark and gloom of the oncoming neopaganism that threat-

ens to pervade mankind at this end of a century and the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity.

In *Mulieris Dignitatem* the Holy Father says that what he writes is nothing more than explication of what is already contained in the Second Vatican Council, in "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", *Gaudium et Spes* (oftentimes misquoted, abused and misconstrued), as well as in the great decree on the apostolate of the laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.

THESE DOCUMENTS of the Second Vatican Council are enormously significant in reiterating and clothing in new phraseology the whole doctrine of the Catholic Church in regard to the family and the family's place as the primary evangelizing unit of that great and universal Church, which is Christ's body and Christ's bride. John Paul II says,

"The calling of woman into existence at man's side as a helper fit for him in the unity of the two provides the visible world of creatures with particular conditions so that the law of God may be poured into the hearts of the beings created in His image."

When the author of the words to the Ephesians calls Christ the bridegroom and the Church the bride, he indirectly confirms through this analogy the truth about woman as bride. The bridegroom is the one who loves; the bride is loved; it is she who receives love in order to return love."

It is very difficult to find a more splendid encapsulation of

**Only the family
can rescue our
civilization from
its steep decline...**

the Catholic doctrine of married love, as well as a synthesis of what it is to form the basic unit of human society, the family, than those words of the Pope. It is certainly in the orientation of the family in natural and in supernatural love that one is able to discern the basic evangelizing power that is given to us as members of the human family.

ONE OF THE INSIGHTS used frequently by ancient writers and by spiritual writers, but confirmed by its usage in the Second Vatican Council, is the calling of the Catholic family a "domestic Church" or a little Church or a home Church. And I think in this context that the insight is especially relevant because it teaches us the need to evangelize, how to proclaim the light of the Good News in the face of encroaching darkness; how to proclaim the oneness of God, the truth of Christianity and of our Catholic faith. It gives to families the duty — reiterates the duty — first of all to proclaim the Good News as an ecclesial undertaking, a Church work.

If the family is the Church, the domestic Church, the home Church, the little Church, then it must do Church work. If the family in its intimate familial relationship is considered to be a reflection of the great Church, then the family must take on some of the characteristics of that universal Church. One of these is to be intrinsically and inherently missionary—to share the faith and to enrich the faith of those who possess it already.

The family *as family* has a certain kind of evangelizing duty then, a duty that is carried out basically by witness. It is also carried out in word and action. As a subtle addiction, the neopaganism, the hermaphroditism of the deity, the attempt to depict God in blasphemous terms which are androgynous, must be resisted strongly by any family. But it must not simply be a case of resistance. It must also be on the part of the family, if they are bearers of the good news, an effort to reach out to those who themselves are deceived or in some cases to those who are doing the deceiving, by evangelizing in word and witness that come from basic Christianity—our basic adherence to the Catholic faith—to bring these people into another perspective; to see equality of gender in its true terms, not as some absurd grasping for power, not some kind of rewriting of history that fails to appreciate the efforts that Christianity alone has made over the long centuries to liberate women from oppression and bondage and despotism; and to give them that kind of equality that comes from basic creation—from sharing fully in the redemptive act of Christ and from the glorious and splendid destiny of being called equally to holiness and glory.

SOME YEARS AGO a Catholic family moved into a town in the southeastern part of the United States. They were the only Catholics in town and as such they were more or less the objects of curiosity. Whenever they would walk out on the street or go from place to place some of the little children of the town would shout, "There goes the Catholic Church!" In a certain sense, the call of the children was an assertion of an important truth, because that family did, in a certain way, carry within it the very kernel of the Catholic Church; and it did represent to those

townspeople all that the Catholic Church is and does.

How important it was in that family that the proper discernment of the role of the husband and wife, the proper relationship of father and mother to the children, would be stated in terms consonant with divine revelation; with that plan, with that economy, that God from all eternity has for the relationship of his creation - one of his creatures to the other.

Those people, of course, who have another way of bringing, not good news but evil news; who have another way, not of building up but destroying the basic building block of humanity, will always be striving to insinuate into our cultural milieu a set of attitudes and values which contradict the fundamentals of divine revelation, and in some instances, the fundamentals of the humanity that they claim to be protecting and advancing.

Those who erroneously conclude that the equality of women requires a deviation from the normative tradition of an all-male priesthood in the Catholic Church are sometimes doing this in sincerity, sometimes in a state of ignorance in regard to the theological issues at stake. Sometimes (perhaps most of the time) this is invincible ignorance; but there are other times when it is quite vincible. There are other people doing this who are not simply misguided, but who have the destruction of Christianity and of monotheism itself in their hearts. This, to say the least, is perfidious.

ALLOW ME TO CONCLUDE by once again asserting the immense value of the treasure that God has given us in the current pontifical magisterium [the teaching authority of the pope] and in that of our immediate past. Especially in the writings of Pope Paul VI and now in the writings of John Paul II, we have those teaching instruments by which Catholic families can assimilate into themselves and into the very fiber of their being — into the warp and woof of their cultural structure — the teachings of Christ; and thereby may assimilate into themselves the Word of God. They can also, by studying these writings, by making them part of themselves, impart this Word of God to those who in His Providence, may be the object of their evangelizing effort. In that evangelization they themselves will find, in the words of the liturgy, "refreshment, light and peace."

It is my prayer and hope that this organization, Women for Faith and Family, will carry forth its fine work in the midst of whatever tribulations God's providence allows it to endure—will carry forth the flaming torch of Catholic truth. With the courage and strength that has been manifested by you hitherto, light on earth that fire which Jesus spoke of, saying He came to kindle it among us. And this, my friends, is the fire of God's love. ❧ ❧ ❧

* The Pope's Audience talks have been collected in a volume, *On the Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis*, published by the Daughters of St. Paul. The other documents mentioned above are also available from the Daughters of St. Paul.

1992 WFF Conference



Top: Germaine Murray;
Father Paul Mankowsk;
Bill & Teresa McKenzie
with baby Maria

Center: Mary Burkemper and Joan
Maschmann at registration table

Family Festival & Mass features exhibits, St. Nicholas visit

A Mass for the Second Sunday of Advent and family festival was held December 6, co-sponsored by Women for Faith & Family, St. Louis, and the new Gateway School at St. Bartholemew's Church in suburban Hazelwood, Missouri. Fr. Lawrence Brennan, CM, of Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis was the celebrant and homilist at Mass.

The family festival in the school cafeteria featured exhibits of Advent customs, a visit from St. Nicholas, and refreshments. Theresa McKenzie and Phyllis Mees co-ordinated the exhibits, which displayed many ideas for the celebration of the season.

A newly revised edition of Women for Faith & Family's *Celebrating Advent and Christmas: A Family Sourcebook* was introduced at the festival. The book contains suggestions for family activities, crafts, and a variety of traditional seasonal prayers, and origins of many customs of Advent and Christmas. WFF's *Lent and Easter Family Sourcebook* is also available.

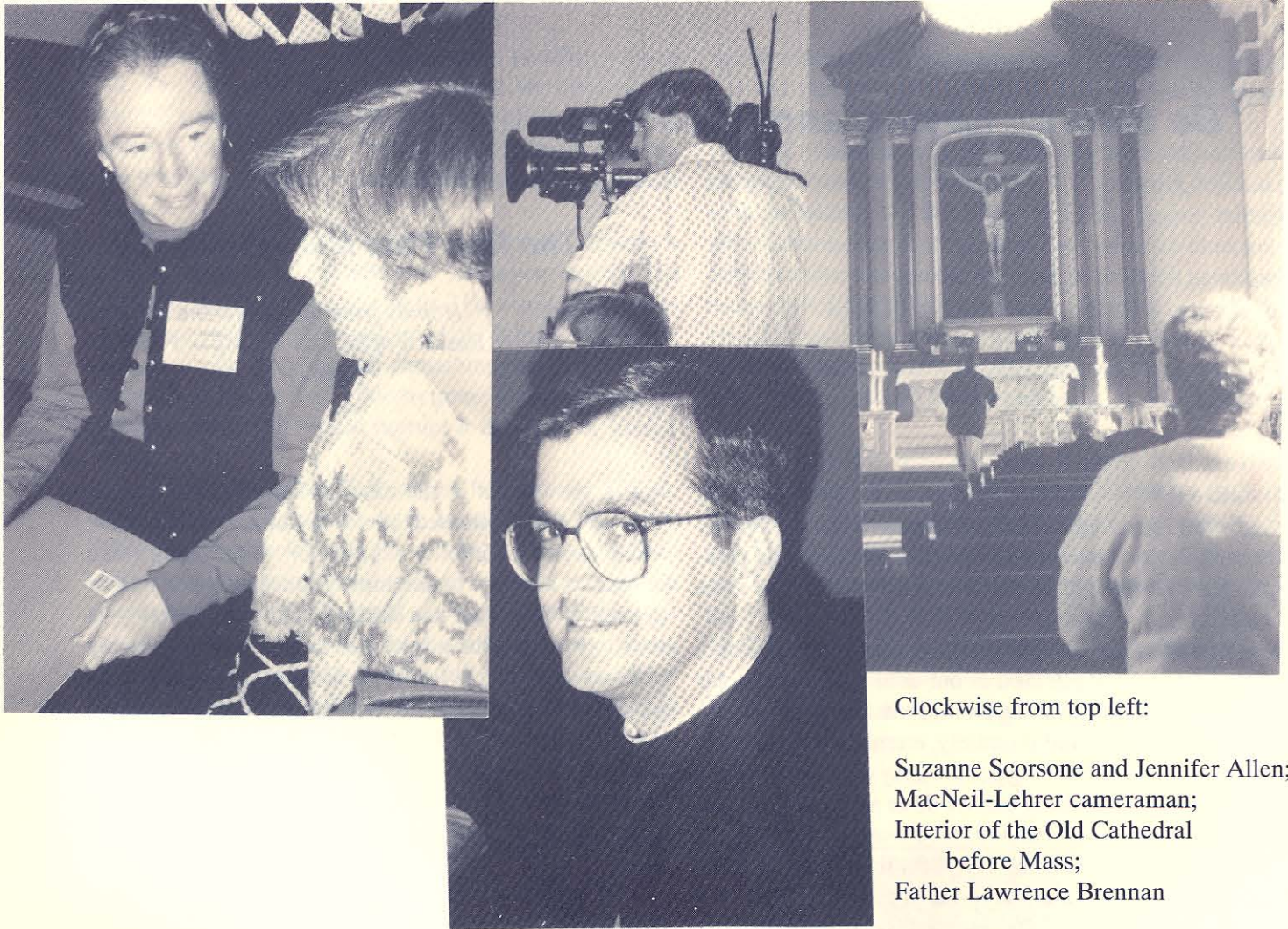
Copies may be ordered from WFF's St. Louis office, PO Box 8326, St. Louis, MO 63132. Suggested donation, \$5.00 for *Advent*, \$6.00 for *Lent*, or \$10.00 for both books.

WFF—Toledo Meets— Ohio WFF Groups Plan Joint Session

More than fifty people attended a Women for Faith & Family day of recollection in October at Queen of the Holy Rosary Cathedral in Toledo. The Rev. James Viall of St. Rose's Church, Cleveland, presented the talks, and was celebrant and homilist at the Mass.

At the Toledo meeting, plans were initiated for a joint meeting in March with WFF-Cleveland at the Shrine of Our Lady, Bellevue, Ohio. A day of recollection with Fr. Viall and luncheon are included in the plans.

For further information, contact **Lois Welch**, 2332 Castlewood, Toledo OH 43613. (Western Ohio region); or **Pat Feighan**, 11009 Edgewater Drive, Cleveland, OH 44102. Phone: (216)281-9357 (Northeastern Ohio region).



Clockwise from top left:

Suzanne Scorsone and Jennifer Allen;
MacNeil-Lehrer cameraman;
Interior of the Old Cathedral
before Mass;
Father Lawrence Brennan

Ninth Annual WFF Conference — November 5, 6 & 7, 1993 to Study New *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (the “universal catechism”) will be the focus of the Ninth Annual WFF Conference, to be held November 5, 6 and 7, 1993, at the newly renovated Clarion Hotel in St. Louis.

Bishop Christoph Schoenborn, a Vatican advisor for the Catechism, is an invited speaker. **Msgr. Michael Wrenn**, catechetical advisor for the Archdiocese of New York, **Fr. Joseph Fessio, S.J.** of Ignatius Press and *Catholic World Report*, and **Dr. Joyce Little**, theologian, will address the conference. Other speakers are being arranged at press date.

The new Catechism, the first official catechism to be produced by the Vatican since the Counter-reformation, was released in its original French language version in late November. Translations into other languages (including

the official Latin text) are expected to be available in early 1993. This compendium of core Catholic teaching will be the guiding resource for the production of all catechetical materials. The Catechism will be used by bishops, by writers and teachers, and all those responsible for the religious instruction and formation of new Catholics.

“Because the new Catechism is so important, Catholic teachers and pastors, mothers and fathers should study it in depth,” said WFF director, Helen Hull Hitchock. “We expect the 1993 conference talks to offer useful insights about the teaching the Catechism contains, and how these central elements of the Catholic faith can best be transmitted to others,” she said.

For further conference information, contact the WFF office: Ph/Fax (314) 863-8385.

“Be Strong, Loving and Wise”

The Rev. Paul Mankowski, S.J.

*Homily from the Conference Mass
Basilica of St. Louis, King of France
Sunday, October 4, 1992*

THE STORY IS TOLD of King Louis the 14th of France, that, after receiving news of a crushing defeat in battle by his armies, he summoned his palace chaplain and complained: “How could God do this to me after all I’ve done for Him?”

It is, of course, fatuous to suppose, as King Louis did, that any of us can put God in our debt by lightening his burdens, by accomplishing for him what he could accomplish on his own. God is entirely, eternally and perfectly happy in himself. Nothing good we say or do could add to that happiness. Nothing bad we do or say could subtract from it. In creating mankind, God was not producing a race of robots to fetch and carry, for there is nothing we bring to him that could have the slightest effect on his blessedness. When we perform our task perfectly, we are, in a strictly logical sense, “useless servants.” The question asks itself, “Why then, were we created. What is the point of our being here at all?” Some of you will remember the catechism answer: We were created to know, love and serve God in this world so as to be happy with him in the next.

This very notion is the keystone of the Pastoral Constitution of the Church of the second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes*). The purpose of our lives, the point of every activity, whether of work or recreation or companionship or study is to come to know and love God more profoundly, to serve him by working in this world for its betterment, and in so doing to prepare ourselves to share God’s own perfect happiness. Whether you’re frying an egg or fixing the lawn mower, or teaching your children arithmetic, you’re either working for this goal or against it.

It is easy for all of us to lose sight of this reason we’re put here, and to let ourselves become dispirited and unfocused in the worries and vexations of day to day life.

We’re shown this in the case of Timothy, the man to whom St. Paul addressed the words which we heard in the second reading. Timothy was a bishop, a timid man, a man of uneven health, who felt himself unequal to the task of preaching the gospel in a complex, pluralist society — a society in which the gospel was unglamorous, a society that was unwilling to receive it. He was not the last of his kind. It is interesting to listen to the words of encouragement Paul gives him. He says, “Look, bishop: remember why you were ordained in the first place; the reason I laid hands on you: The spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit but rather one that makes us strong, loving and wise.”

We might hear in the words strong, loving, wise, an echo of the formula in which our human purpose is summed up. The Holy Spirit makes us wise in knowing God, loving in embracing God, and strong in serving him. As a bishop, Timothy’s job is to be a sign to all of the final destiny of human life. He is to be bold in concerning himself with the things of ultimate importance — not numbed by caution and fatigue — in attending to the intermediate things, to the means, to the multiple and contrary demands of secular life. His role is to be an emblem of the meaning of every Christian life.

This task is not simply a spiritual attitude, not just a way of thinking. It makes demands on the whole person, for it is the whole person who is to be redeemed; who is to be conformed to Christ. Our intellect is engaged, by becoming wise, by grasping the Truth — and so, redeemed. Our heart is engaged by directing our emotions and affections towards that love which is their source — and so, redeemed. Our will is engaged by strengthening the resolve with which we hold fast to our faith, especially when it’s tough to do so — and so, redeemed.

Now, it is no use asking which of these is more

important, because no full humanity is possible without all. The man who has strength, but no learning and no human sympathies, is a bully. The man who has brilliance of mind, but without resolve and devoid of love, is a prig. He who has compassion, but no wisdom and no spine, is a sap.

It is important that Paul does not regard Timothy's task as an easy one. He tells him: "Bear your share of the hardship which the gospel entails." He warns him, too, as a bishop, against feeling ashamed of his faith. This faith, too, Paul says, is a deposit, something that is to be kept intact; something that Timothy must guard, obviously, against those who would corrupt it or soil it or give it away.

This should be familiar ground, because the faith St. Paul charged Timothy to keep is still our faith today. Those who cherish this faith and let it form their lives encounter increasing hostility from the culture in which these lives must be led. Of course, Catholicism that accommodates itself to the fascinations and resentments of the age will not earn this hostility. So, today, if our patrimony, our 'deposit' is diluted or combined with a

suitably fashionable social program, it is effectively gelded, and will earn little of the hardship Timothy was promised by St. Paul.

Half-catholics are okay. Catholics "with a difference" are no problem. It is orthodox faith — the faith deposited with the bishops — that is so offensive. To our cultural elite, Catholicism is not so much untrue as un-chic; and, in the boardrooms and faculty lounges in which good taste is monitored, Catholic orthodoxy is regarded as one of the coarse amusements of the working class. Yet, it is not fashion or appeasement or public opinion that made those first martyrs strong, loving and wise. It was the Holy Spirit.

Let us, then — we Catholics — join St. Paul at a time in our history when we are, perhaps, slightly afraid of hardship and more than slightly afraid of shame, in praying for our bishops — and ourselves: that they might remember the reasons hands were laid upon them; that we may remember the reason we were made by God in the first place; and that the Holy Spirit might make us whole — might give us the full stature of Christ.

We pray for insight. For compassion. For guts. 🍷

Dear Brothers and Sisters —

Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission. ...Let us remember the missionary enthusiasm of the first Christian communities. Despite the limited means of travel and communication in those times, the proclamation of the Gospel quickly reached the ends of the earth. And this was the religion of a Man who had died on a cross, "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles"! ...You must set yourselves on the path of holiness. Only thus can you be a sign of God in the world...

*—Pope John Paul II, in REDEMPTORIS
MISSIO*

Messages from our Bishops...

From Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States

On the joyful occasion of the Eighth Annual Conference of Women for Faith and Family in St. Louis this October 2 – 4, 1992, I have the singular privilege of conveying to the participants the heartfelt greetings and prayerful best wishes of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

Your assembly will indeed be marked by special joy and fervor as you concentrate on your theme, “The Catholic Family Evangelizing Culture.” May this gathering provide an occasion for your participants to grow in the commitment to proclaim the truth of the faith for the authentic benefit and welfare of family, society, and culture.

As a sign of his spiritual esteem and solidarity, *Pope John Paul II* imparts to you his *Apostolic Blessing*, granted through the intercession of Mary, Our Mother. To the sentiments of the Holy Father, allow me to add my own prayerful best wishes.

From His Eminence, Anthony, Cardinal Bevilacqua Archbishop of Philadelphia

As Women for Faith & Family begins its 8th Annual Conference, I greet you with deep admiration and spiritual affection.

The essential mission of the Church is the evangelization of all peoples. Ever loyal to the Holy Father and to the Magisterium of the Church, Women for Faith & Family is eminently qualified to explore the urgent challenges of “Evangelizing the Culture.”

I extend to you, the participants of the Conference, and all the members of Women for Faith & Family my support, prayers and blessings for a successful and grace-filled meeting.

From The Most Rev. Theodore E. McCarrick Archbishop of Newark

I want to send my prayers and good wishes to the women who will be attending the eighth annual Women for Faith and Family Conference in Saint Louis. May the Lord give you vision and courage as you study the challenge to be the evangelizers of our culture and our society. The Church counts so much on your deep faith and your joyful fidelity to the Gospel and to the Kingdom of God which it proclaims. May our Lady’s presence at your assembly be for all of you an inspiration and a grace.

From The Most Rev. James S. Sullivan Bishop of Fargo

There is no doubt that the theme bringing you together during these days is of crucial significance for the life of the Church, and for the well-being of our Catholic families. We pray that through the Catholic families represented by your apostolate, a renaissance in family life will flourish throughout the nation!

There is no doubt either that the exploration of the link between evangelization and culture is dear to the heart of our Holy Father. Only a few months ago, in a major document, he repeated his concern for “a problem that is strongly felt these days”, namely “the demand for the evangelization of cultures”.

The masterful Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, will, I am sure, be mentioned often during gathering. Its message is as timely today as it was when it came from the pen of the Holy Father seventeen years ago: “The rift between the gospel and culture is undoubtedly an unhappy circumstance of our times just as it has been in other eras. Accordingly, we must devote all our resources and all our efforts to the sedulous evangelization of human culture. ... [The Church] seeks by virtue of the gospel to affect and, as it were, recast the criteria of judgment, the standard of values, the incentives and life standards of the human race which are inconsistent with the word of God and the plan of salvation. ... This proclamation must be made above all by witness. We envisage, therefore, a Christian or a group of Christians [the Women for Faith & Family] as people who, in the midst of the community in which they live, will show that they are capable of understanding and accepting others and of cooperating with all those who are seeking to protect what is noble and good.”

Thanking the women for Faith & Family for the witness you bring to all of us...

From The Most Francis E. George, OMI Bishop of Yakima

Thank you for your letter with its invitation to address the Women for Faith and Family conference in St. Louis. I would very much like to have been able to share a program with Father Paul Mankowski and Professor Hitchcock. The reason I have to refuse your invitation is because I will be in Washington, D.C. for the Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine. ...

I’m grateful for your work and your presence.

*From The Most Rev. David B. Thompson
Bishop of Charleston*

As Women for Faith and Family gather in St. Louis for the conference on The Catholic Family: Evangelizing the Culture I offer my prayers for God's blessings on your deliberations, that you may find ways in which Catholic women and families can contribute to the evangelical mission of the Church in "Evangelizing the Culture."

*From The Most Rev. James Patrick Keleher
Bishop of Belleville*

... This year, I am delighted to have been invited to speak before your distinguished membership.

In my talk which is entitled, "Contemplata Tradere—Sharing Faith", I would like to highlight the important role of mothers in sharing their Catholic faith with their families. I hope it will strike a resonant chord.

By happy coincidence, you will be meeting at the very time we will be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Coming of the Cross to America. Five hundred years ago this very October, Columbus made that great journey to the Americas and brought with him the symbols of our Catholic faith and tradition. It is my contention that women like yourselves have been a most important part of spreading that faith and tradition since that historic moment.

Looking forward to being with you and thanking for your support of our own Episcopal Ministry, and especially for being collaborators with us bishops in the grand task of passing on our Catholic faith and heritage.

*From The Most Rev. John R. Sheets
Auxiliary Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend*

I am happy that the publication of the articles on feminist language in the liturgy will be available soon. ... There probably has never occurred such a *tour de force* in the manipulation of language in the whole of the formation of language as has taken place within the past twenty years in English speaking countries.

... I shall be looking forward to reading the proceedings of the [Women for Faith & Family Conference].

May the Lord continue to bless you, your family, and your work for Christ and the Church.

*From The Most Rev. Alfred Hughes
Auxiliary Bishop of Boston*

Please express to the participants in the eighth annual Women for Faith and Family conference my warm greetings and pledge of prayer. Women for Faith and Family make a remarkable contribution in our present culture in helping us all to appreciate better the call and unique gifts of women in society and in the Church. May God bless abundantly your deliberations.

*From The Most Rev. Jerome Hastrich
Bishop of Gallup (retired)*

Would that there were more of you. Hope your meeting gets equal publicity with the opposition. Keep up the fight.

Special gifts to Women for Faith & Family

In Memoriam

*Joanne Bick, from Lucinda Marrs • George F. Hitchcock, from Donald and Sherry Tyree
Grace Zumwalt Skelton, aunt of Evelyn V. Stateler • Mrs. Gene Sweeney, from Gene and Mary Louise Coughlin
Eugene Schettler, from Donna Schettler • Father Vincent Miceli, from Mrs. Gloria P. Cook
Carmine D. Diorio, MD., from Mrs. Carmine Diorio • Anna Conant, from Eleanor F. Phelps
Willard E. Jones, Jr., from Frances Kruse Fillion • Rosemary, from Harriet S. Wilson
Joan Donohue Ellis, from Joan Donohue • Michael Gesel, from Kate G. Gagne
Father of Mrs. Aldo Bernardo • Charlotte Dermody, mother of Mrs. James A. Brodbeck
The Rev. Daniel M. Lynch, from Mrs. Frank Lynch*

In Thanksgiving

Wedding Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Martin Duggan • Birth of Francesca Louise Kassing

Feminist Language and the Liturgy

by Helen Hull Hitchcock

FEMINISM and related ideologies have exerted unparalleled influence on organized religion — and on nearly every other aspect of Western culture — for about three decades. Nowhere is evidence of this dominant influence more obvious than in worship of the liberal mainline denominations. The transformation of the language of worship began almost imperceptibly with relatively peripheral liturgical elements, such as prayers incorporating approved feminist language and concepts, and with “corrected” lyrics to existing hymns and words of prayers.

Encountering no effective resistance to these achievements, the feminists’ objective of radical destruction of “oppressive, patriarchal” religion has now accelerated into an all-out attack on the Scripture and on the core beliefs it incorporates which are common to both Christianity and Judaism — essential beliefs about the nature of God, of mankind’s “imaging” of God, of the meaning of human sexuality and of the relationship of men and women with one another and with God.

Feminist/liberationist ideologues (of both sexes), embracing a quasi-Marxist political and social analysis of reality, view themselves as victims of oppression instilled in their “oppressors” (the male sex, the patriarchy, the hierarchy) chiefly by religion. Feminist/liberationist theologians are convinced that the very most central teachings of “Western” religion are essentially destructive of the radical personal autonomy of the individual.


Therefore, according to their view, the power of these teachings (the Judeo-Christian “Myth”) must be destroyed — and not only destroyed, but replaced with a changeling Myth concocted to conform their own politically charged notion of reality and presided over by a god (or goddess) of their own devising and which they claim the right to name. So far there has been sparse and ineffective resistance to the relentless undermining of the worship of God.

Because fundamental and abiding religious beliefs (and their consequent moral and ethical teachings) are codified and epitomized first and foremost in the Scrip-

ture which, in turn, informs all liturgical worship, the principal objective of the “re-mythologizers” is to subject Scripture to a “hermeneutic of suspicion”. The words of the Bible, then, must be de-constructed, re-formed, its metaphors suborned, its offending concepts re-fabricated, in order to undermine and eventually destroy the Word itself. For it is this Word uttered by God which gives power and authority to the faith. For feminist theologians, *YHVH* — the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Holy Trinity, Father of the Messiah, Jesus, the Incarnate Word, the Holy Spirit, Alpha and Omega, Author and Finisher of our Faith — is not the Savior, but a powerful metaphor for their chief Enemy: “Patriarchal Religion”.

Feminism’s concept of personal freedom requires that the Scripture through which God communicates to mankind be radically transformed in order to supplant Him with the Autonomous Self — a Self who is self-empowered to name its own reality, its own god, to be its own judge. To destroy God’s Word is to render Him speechless, powerless. But the Word cannot be annihilated unless the meaning of words, the language, its symbols, images and metaphors through which it transmits the immutable truth and perennial message of God are first annihilated, nullified, enslaved. Scripture as the structure of God’s Word itself — as a Temple in which His truth abides and which is the seat of His power — must be dismantled in order that the “Imperial Self” may be securely enthroned within a New Tower of Babel built from the rubble of the Word.

The battle of man against God for personal power has persisted throughout human history, and its current phase will certainly be long and difficult. It will continue to require courageous and intelligent action by men and women of Faith.

Because so many Catholics are deeply concerned about language changes in their parish liturgies, we reprint on the following page excerpts from Pope John Paul II’s 1988 Apostolic Letter on the Liturgy. 

Quotations from John Paul II's Apostolic Letter for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Constitution on the Liturgy

December 4, 1988

Erroneous Applications of Liturgical Reform

13. Side by side with ... benefits of the liturgical reform, one has to acknowledge with regret deviations of greater or lesser seriousness in its application.

On occasion there have been noted illicit omissions or additions, rites invented outside the framework of established norms; postures or songs which are not conducive to faith or to a sense of the sacred; abuses in the practice of general absolution; confusion between the ministerial priesthood, linked with ordination, and the common priesthood of the faithful which has its foundation in baptism.

It cannot be tolerated that certain priests should take upon themselves the right to compose eucharistic prayers or to substitute profane readings for texts from Sacred Scripture. Initiatives of this sort, far from being linked with the liturgical reform as such ... are in direct contradiction to it, disfigure it and deprive the Christian people of the genuine treasures of the liturgy of the Church.

It is for the bishops to root out such abuses, because the regulation of the liturgy depends on the bishop within the limits of the law and because "the life in Christ of his faithful people in some sense is derived from and depends upon him."

Adaptation

16. Another important task for the future is that of the adaptation of the liturgy to different cultures. ... Liturgical diversity can be a source of enrichment, but it can also provoke tensions, mutual misunderstandings and even divisions. In this field it is clear that diversity must not damage unity. It can only gain expression in fidelity to the common faith, to the sacramental signs that the Church has received from Christ and to hierarchical communion.

Attention to New Problems

17. ... In these 25 years, new problems have arisen ... for example: the exercise of a diaconate open to married men; liturgical tasks in celebrations which can be entrusted to lay people; liturgical celebrations for children ...; the procedures for the composition of liturgical texts appropriate to a particular country.

The Organisms Responsible for Liturgical Renewal

19. The task of promoting the renewal of the liturgy pertains in the first place to the Apostolic See. ... In the

new structure of the Roman Curia ... the whole area of sacred liturgy is brought together and placed under the responsibility of a single dicastery: the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Always taking into account the area of competence of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, it pertains to this congregation to regulate and promote the liturgy ... keeping watch over sacramental discipline. ...

The congregation will assist diocesan bishops ... [and it] will be in close and trusting contact with the episcopal conferences for all that pertains to their competence in the liturgical field.

The Episcopal Conferences

20. The episcopal conferences have had the weighty responsibility of preparing the translations of their liturgical books. Immediate need occasionally led to the use of provisional translations, approved *ad interim*. But now the time has come to reflect upon certain difficulties that have subsequently emerged, to remedy certain defects or inaccuracies, to complete partial translations, to compose or approve chants to be used in the liturgy, to ensure respect for the texts approved, and last to publish liturgical books in a form that both testifies to the stability achieved and is worthy of the mysteries being celebrated.

For the work of translation ... each episcopal conference was required to establish a national commission and ensure the collaboration of experts in the various sectors of liturgical science and pastoral practice. The time has come to evaluate this commission, its past activity, both the positive and negative aspects, and the guidelines and the help which it has received from the episcopal conference regarding its composition and activity. The role of this commission is much more delicate when the conference wishes to introduce certain measures of adaptation or inculturation. This is one more reason for making sure that the commission contains people who are truly competent.

The Diocesan Bishop

21. In every diocese the bishop is the principal dispenser of the mysteries of God, and likewise the governor, promoter and guardian of the entire liturgical life of the people. ☩

The Politics of Prayer: Feminist Language and the Worship of God, edited with introduction by Helen Hull Hitchcock. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992.

This book is a compendium of essays on the subject of the current politicization of the language by feminist ideologues, especially in the area of worship.

Contributors to this volume include Catholic, Protestant and Jewish believers, men and women, scripture scholars, theologians, translators, linguists, poets, clergy and laity, who have in common, in addition to a shared regard for and interest in the integrity of language, an unambiguous affirmation of their religious faith and a clear-eyed and objective view of the nature of the Cosmic War in which we are all now engaged. Their essays offer important insights into the function of language and objectives of translation, as well as penetrating analysis of the effect of ideologically motivated linguistic innovations on new Scripture translations and on the worship of God.

Several of the contributors to the book have addressed WFF's annual conferences: Dr. Joyce Little, Dr. Suzanne

Scorsone, Juli Loesch Wiley, The Rev. Paul Mankowski, SJ, The Rev. Lawrence Brennan, CM, The Rev. Ralph Wright, OSB, and Dr. Donald DeMarco.

Other distinguished Catholic contributors are The Most Rev. John Sheets, Auxiliary bishop of Fort Wayne/South Bend, Kenneth D. Whitehead, The Rev. Paul Quay, SJ, and Br. Chrysostom Castel.

Essays by sociologists Peter and Brigitte Berger, Harvard Jewish studies professor Jon Levenson, philosopher Michael Levin, UCC theologian Donald Bloesch, Orthodox theologian Deborah Belonick, literary critic Roland M. Frye, and linguistics expert Joseph Beaver are also included.

Appendixes contain the *Statement on Feminism, Language and Liturgy* of WFF, CPC and the Institute on Religious Life; the *Criteria for the Evaluation of Inclusive Language Translations of Scriptural Texts Proposed for Liturgical Use*, adopted by the NCCB in 1990, and critical comments on the *Criteria*.

Bishop John J. Myers of Peoria says of the book, "...The language of worship has become the latest skirmish in a much larger struggle. The contributors to this volume raise important questions concerning ongoing differences over fundamental issues. The ramifications of this struggle for our understanding of God and Divine Revelation cannot be underestimated. The insights contained in *The Politics of Prayer* will be welcomed by all who are concerned about these issues."

Catechisms and Controversies — Religious Education in the Postconciliar Years by Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991

Monsignor Wrenn, a Special Consultant for Religious Education for New York's Cardinal O'Connor and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in New York City, provides an overview of the difficulties in the field of religious education since the Second Vatican Council. This book discusses the elements that have undermined religious education, including the major role that the catechetical establishment played as they stressed the experience of the student over the content to be taught, and explained away or ignored important documents from the Bishops and the Holy See, such as the *General Catechetical Directory*, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, and *Catechesi Tradendæ*.

The book also provides a case history of efforts to impede authentic instruction in the faith — a situation which has made the long-awaited *Catechism for the Universal Church* so necessary. Monsignor Wrenn suggests strategies for the proper implementation of the long-awaited "Universal Catechism".

Cardinal O'Connor says of Msgr. Wrenn's book, "The proposed publication of the *Catechism for the Universal Church* has met with applause by some, disdain by others. Monsignor Wrenn's volume is a fine preparation for all of us to receive the fruits of the theological expertise and precision in the catechism."

THE POLITICS OF PRAYER

FEMINIST LANGUAGE AND
THE WORSHIP OF GOD



EDITED BY
HELEN HULL HITCHCOCK

IGNATIUS

FOCA — Abortion Out of Control

by Nancy Gilroy Valko, RN

IMAGINE a third-trimester abortion performed in a Catholic hospital. Imagine an abortion performed without parental consent on a thirteen-year-old girl by a nurse-midwife. Imagine an abortion performed on a woman who purposely got pregnant in order to get tissue from her unborn baby for a relative with Parkinson's disease.

Shocked? Well, get ready for the so-called "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA) which, if passed by Congress, would sanction such bizarre scenarios.

The Act (H.R. 25) reads:

"Except as provided in subsection (b), a State may not restrict the right of a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy — (1) before fetal viability; or (2) at any time, if such termination is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman.

(b) Medically Necessary Requirements: A State may impose requirements medically necessary to protect the life or health of women referred to in subsection (a)."

The wording of the FOCA in the Senate (S. 25) is similar. Various amendments have been proposed to both versions. Although FOCA was dropped last summer during the presidential race, president-elect Bill Clinton has said he will sign it into law if it is passed this year.

Although it is claimed that FOCA merely codifies the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision of the Supreme Court, both versions of FOCA actually go much further. As the Senate Committee Report on FOCA illustrates, FOCA would effectively prohibit States from ensuring that abortions are done by physicians, and nullify any health regulation considered restrictive by abortion advocates (which encompasses almost all current regulations). It could force even religious hospitals to provide abortions, to eliminate present parental notification laws, and require that States allow abortion for any reason at all

throughout the entire pregnancy.

How can this happen when there are some apparent restrictions in the bill and in proposed amendments? The problem is deceptive language and legal interpretation.

For example, "health of the woman" as reported in the Senate Committee Report means "...all factors — physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age — relevant to the *well-being* of the patient." (emphasis added.) This means that even the slightest emotional discomfort experienced by the mother would overrule any viability restriction!

The Senate Committee Report also makes clear that the "medically necessary" regulation of abortion does not even mean that the abortionist can be required to be a physician. The National Abortion Federation released a report in 1990 recommending that "mid-level clinicians" such as physician-assistants and nurse-midwives be allowed to perform abortions. A group of nurse practitioners has recommended that they be allowed to perform abortions. A recent television news show reported on an Eastern State's "success" in employing physician-assistants rather than actual physicians to perform abortions. Ironically, for all other forms of surgery, States can require that they be performed by doctors. Some States, like Missouri, have required that doctors who perform abortions have privileges at a nearby hospital so that abortion complications can be treated promptly. If FOCA passes, it is impossible to guess what group of people will next be considered competent enough to perform abortion surgery. So much for the pro-abortion cliché that *legal abortions mean safe abortions!*

Other health regulations such as "informed consent" and 24-hour waiting periods would not meet the requirements of the "medically necessary" standards as ex-

plained in the Senate Committee Report. Abortion advocates have long objected to such measures, even when upheld in Court decisions. FOCA would effectively eliminate any regulation not accepted by such abortion advocacy organizations as the National Abortion Federation. Abortion advocates — and particularly those engaged in the abortion industry — consider almost all current regulations “restrictive.”

While the Senate version of FOCA includes an amendment which would allow individuals to refuse to participate in abortion, an amendment protecting private (e.g. Catholic) hospitals from performing abortions was defeated. No Catholic hospital would be exempt from lawsuits compelling them to provide abortion “services.”

The House version of FOCA, an amendment to allow States to prohibit the use of public funds for those abortions which are not necessary to save the life of the mother (the Hyde Amendment) was defeated. Public funding of abortions has long been a goal of abortion advocates and the abortion industry.

FOCA would also invalidate parental involvement laws which have been successful in reducing both abortions *and* pregnancies in minor girls. In the Senate version, States could require “a minor to involve a parent, guardian or *other responsible adult* before terminating a pregnancy” (emphasis added). While this sounds like a

parental notice provision, FOCA would actually force a State to include the option of the “responsible adult” — which could be anyone, for example, a school counselor or even the abortionist himself!

Pro-abortion advocates are more accurate than they realize when they call themselves the “abortion rights movement”. Their support of FOCA means that one surgical operation has “rights” that supercede the rights of unborn babies, women in crisis, fathers, families, and even society itself. The passage of FOCA will truly mean abortion out of control.

Please pray and write your senators and representatives — even if they are already pro-life. A large outpouring of indignation is imperative if this latest outrage which not only threatens to destroy countless lives, but will also prohibit even the free exercise of choice and conscience for millions of Americans. ❀

Nancy Gilroy Valko, R.N., is president of Missouri Nurses for Life, a member of WFF, and an articulate spokeswoman for the disabled.

Prayer for the President and Congress

Excerpt from a prayer composed by Archbishop Carroll, AD 1800

We pray Thee, O God of might, wisdom, and justice, through whom authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment decreed, assist, with Thy Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness, and be eminently useful to Thy people, over whom he presides, by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion; by a faithful execution of the laws in justice and mercy; and by restraining vice and immorality. Let the light of Thy divine wisdom direct the deliberations of Congress, and shine forth in all the proceedings and laws framed for our rule and government, so that they may tend to the preservation of the peace, the promotion of national happiness, the increase of industry, sobriety, and useful knowledge, and may perpetuate to us the blessings of equal liberty. Amen.