

VOICES VOICES VOICES



Vol. III, No. 1

Spring 1988

HAVE OUR VOICES
BEEN SILENT?

NO INDEED!

AND MANY MORE

PROJECTS AND

ACTIVITIES ARE

SCHEDULED FOR 1988.

**WE RELY ON YOUR
HELP TO ACHIEVE OUR
GOAL OF MAKING THE
VOICES OF FAITHFUL
CATHOLIC WOMEN
HEARD.**

**WE DEPEND ON YOUR
PRAYERS, SUGGESTIONS,
AND, YES, DONATIONS.**

**PLEASE BE AS GENEROUS
AS YOU CAN IN
RETURNING THE
DONATION ENVELOPE
INSIDE. PRAY WITH US
THAT ALL OUR EFFORTS
MAY BE USEFUL TO THE
CHURCH!**

HERE WE ARE AGAIN!

Some of you may have received our first issue of **Voices (Summer '86)** and not heard from us since. Others may have recently joined the effort of **Women for Faith & Family**. Some may be wondering if we're still collecting signatures to the **AFFIRMATION (Yes!)** and what we have been doing since you last heard from us.

As you will see in this issue, we have been busy. We were invited to send representatives to a meeting of the laity with Pope John Paul II in San Francisco last September; we held our Third Annual Conference in St. Louis last October; and later in the month, we took a list of all signers of the **AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN** to Rome where it was presented, along with testimony we had earlier prepared for the bishop-delegates to the Synod on the Laity, to Cardinal Edouard Gagnon, head of the Pontifical Council on the Family, who received it on behalf of the Holy Father. (See stories inside)

Earlier in the year, we held a one-day "mini conference" in New Jersey (organized by **AFFIRMATION** signers there), and kept up a fairly heavy schedule of talks, writing, media appearances, etc. throughout the year to keep the voices of faithful Catholic women audible.

Our calendar for 1988 is filling up too. The NCCB's "Pastoral Response to Women's Concerns" appeared in draft form April 12. Also, we have scheduled the 1988 **Women for Faith & Family** conference for October 14 - 16 in St. Louis (see related stories in this issue.)

You may know that the St. Louis staff are all volunteers. None of us is a "professional organizer" (certainly we are not professional fund-raisers!) and we do everything ourselves -- including answering all the mail and composing newsletters! Truly **Women for Faith & Family** is a genuine "grass-roots" movement. And this poses certain "disadvantages" which professionally-run organizations don't have. One of the lessons we've learned by experience is that no matter how many long hours we willingly work, some things just can't be done without money. We have hesitated to ask you for money, because we know (also from experience!) that most families have to exercise a lot of ingenuity to get along on what they have -- and **our** purpose is to **help** families, not put any more burdens on them. (Another thing we've learned is that organizations like **Women for Faith & Family** do not attract the big Foundations who fund groups like "Catholics for a Free Choice.?!")

Our decision last year was that we needed to marshal our modest human and financial resources for the most important projects, and we simply could not publish **VOICES** and do everything else that needed doing. This year we hope to do better -- with God's help and yours.

How often **VOICES** appears will depend on your donations. We intend to send it to all who have expressed particular interest in the work of **Women for Faith & Family**, by sending us a donation, attending a conference, collecting signatures to the **AFFIRMATION**, etc. We don't want to miss anybody, but we almost inevitably will. If you know of someone who should have received a copy of this issue but didn't, please be sure to tell us. Also, if you should change your address, keep us informed. Your suggestions and comments are always appreciated..

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

FRANCE

EFFA (Equipes Familiales de Formation Apostolique) is an association for the spiritual, doctrinal and pedagogical formation of families, to enable them to assume their tasks of teaching their children, all members of the family and all families, in fidelity to the Holy Father's apostolic exhortation, **Familiaris Consortio**.

Madeleine Hardy, EFFA's national director, assures Women for Faith & Family of "our union in prayer in the Heart of Christ and that of His Mother." Copies of the French translation of the AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN have been sent to EFFA.

In Rome during the Synod on the Laity, we met briefly with **Jean Luc Dherse**, a layman and an official of the Synod. Commenting on the 'AFFIRMATION POUR FEMMES CATHOLIQUES', M. Dherse said, "This is exactly what we need in France." (*M. Dherse's firm is planning the "Chunnel", a tunnel under the English Channel which would connect England and France.*)

CANADA

Several members of **Women for Faith & Family — Canada** attended the 1987 WFF Conference in St. Louis. The Toronto-area group has met regularly for prayer, study and mutual support. In spite of continued difficulties presented by the feminist-inspired "Green Kit" approved by the Canadian Bishops Conference for distribution throughout Canadian Catholic parishes, about 3,000 signatures to the AFFIRMATION have been collected in Canada and presented to Pope John Paul II.

WFF-Canada was one of the sponsors of the **Catholic Laity in Society Conference** held in Toronto in August. The concerns and recommendations of the conference were compiled in a brief presented to all Canadian Bishops and to the Vatican. A second CLS conference was held in December.

AUSTRALIA — NEW ZEALAND

Margaret Butts and **Prue Oldham**, of **WFF-Australia** were in Rome during the Synod on the Laity. They met with officials from the **Pontifical Council on the Family**, including Australian **Fr. Peter Elliott**, and other Vatican officials. (*See Story Page 7*)

A recent issue of the **Endeavor Forum** newsletter indicates that **WFF-New Zealand** is in formation. *Stay tuned. . .*

WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Representatives of Women for Faith and Family were invited to attend a meeting of about 2,000 lay leaders with Pope John Paul II during his Papal Visit to San Francisco. Christine Crowe, Anne Connell, Helen Hitchcock and Sherry Tyree attended the meeting which took place in St. Mary's Cathedral on September 18, 1987, while local women, organized by Del McLaughlin, stood outside in a show of support for the Holy Father.

Women for Faith and Family had made its presence known during the days preceding the historic meeting by distributing news releases holding a press conference at the San Francisco Press Club, and granting media interviews. Sherry

INDIA

Dr. Marie Mignon Masacarenhas, a physician from India who, with her husband, operates **CREST**, a natural family-planning institute in Bangalore, visited **WFF** in St. Louis in June 1987. Dr. Masacarenhas was in the United States for an international Pro-Life meeting in New Orleans. She spoke informally to a group of about 25 St. Louis pro-life leaders and **Women for Faith & Family** staff members. Dr. Masacarenhas and her husband are members of the **Pontifical Council on the Family**.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta wrote a special message to be read at the 1987 WFF Conference. She said "I will pray for each one of you and your families that in this Marian Year Jesus may give you the gift of loving His Mother as He loved her . . . Our Lady was full of God because she lived for God alone — yet she thought of herself only as the handmaid of the Lord. Let us do the same."

HOLLAND

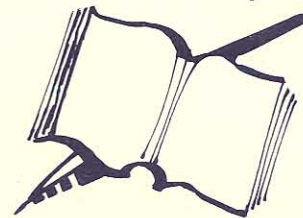
VROUWEN IN DE R. K. KERK, a Dutch organization of Catholic women, has translated the AFFIRMATION and as of last August had collected more than 1500 signatures. They also prepared a response to the questions posed by the **Lineamenta** for the Synod on the Laity, and continue to hold meetings for the discussion of issues of concern to Catholic women.

The Dutch translation of the AFFIRMATION (**Verklaring Voor Katholieke Vrouwen**) is now available from our office.

GREAT BRITAIN

Welcome to the newly organized **Women for Faith & Family — United Kingdom!** **Mary Wendel** of the St. Louis WFF office met with the British organizers in London in March. **Clare Anderson** (12 Pirbright Rd, Fairborough - 9414 7AD, ENGLAND) is the director of our new sister organization.

Joanna Bogle, a frequent contributor to English Catholic periodicals and BBC "personality", will be a featured speaker at the 1988 **Women for Faith & Family** conference this fall.



and Helen were featured guests on "Jan Black Journal," a popular radio talk show, the following week.

Pope John Paul II addressed the group of lay leaders, emphasizing the laity's call to live in, sanctify and transform the world. He stressed loyalty to our vocations of married life, the necessity of the conjugal act being open to procreation of children, and the family as an evangelizing community. He proclaimed the dignity of women as women, equal to men in dignity, and stated that "the true advancement of women requires that clear recognition be given to the value of their maternal and family role."

Bishops' "Pastoral Response" to women issued.

"Partners In The Mystery Of Redemption" Ambiguous, Defective.

(STATEMENT ON THE "PASTORAL RESPONSE TO WOMEN'S CONCERNS" — APRIL 12, 1988)

The first draft of the American bishops' pastoral letter, "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption" is deeply ambiguous, flawed in its methodology, does not truly address the needs of most American Catholic women, and reflects primarily the interests of a small minority of mostly professional religious women.

Although the bishops restate official Church teaching, their conclusions and recommendations often fail to follow consistently from the Church's unified position. The document omits discussion of the real divisions and confusion within the Church regarding central Catholic teachings, the dangers of feminist excesses and the link between feminism and abortion. It does not adequately address real concerns and problems of Catholic women and their families, such as the lack of authentic and authoritative moral and religious education for children, subtle and overt discrimination against women who choose to devote their lives to raising their families, and the pervasive anti-religious influence of contemporary society.

The bishops evidently believe, following their "consultation process", that large numbers of Catholic women are now unable to accept the Church's teaching on birth control,

abortion, human sexuality and marriage, ordination, etc. If this is true, what is needed is a massive educational project which would deepen understanding of Church teachings and doctrines and the reasons for them. This, in fact, would be a loving and healing "pastoral" response. However, to give the impression by their contradictory recommendations that it is the **Church** which is in need of "conversion" and change reflects a misplaced compassion which can only compound the personal and spiritual problems of the women it was intended to help, and increase confusion, alienation and malaise.

We hope that the revised draft of the bishop's pastoral letter will more realistically reflect the genuine needs of the majority of American Catholic women and their families, and will thoroughly incorporate the findings of Pope John Paul II following the recent Synod on the Laity. As it stands, we are fearful that the draft pastoral will be a source of further division and disunity within the Church, and contribute to the erosion of the true evangelical witness of the Catholic faith to the modern world.

Commentaries on the pastoral will appear in 30 Days (2515 McAllister, S.F. CA 94118) May '88, June '88; Fidelity (206 Marquette Ave., South Bend, IN 46617) National Catholic Reporter, Our Sunday Visitor, and Crisis also contain comments by W.F.F.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Here are some suggestions which we think can help to spread the good news that most Catholics in America want to be faithful to the Church, and to help our bishops and others know the **real** concerns and problems of Catholic women and their families:

1. Help distribute the **AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN**. Try to persuade your pastor, your bishop or your diocesan newspaper to help by printing the **AFFIRMATION** in parish bulletins or the diocesan publications. (*Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could double or triple the current number before the end of the new "consultation process" in November, 1988?*)
2. Contact your diocese to get a copy of the Bishop's pastoral, "Partners In The Mystery Of Redemption." Write personally to your bishop, indicating your unity with the Church and your concern about current issues affecting women and their families. (*We suggest sending copies of your letter to **Women for Faith & Family** and to other Church leaders - see **Addresses, page 7***)
3. Get together with other women in your area. Attend "listening sessions" together if they are held in your diocese. (*It's a lot easier to speak up if you are not alone - contact us if you need help in finding other women who are Affirmation signers.*)

4. Volunteer for service on parish school-boards, parish councils or diocesan commissions. If you can't volunteer yourself, encourage someone else who **can**, to represent views consistent with authentic Catholic teaching.
5. Prepare yourself, spiritually and intellectually, to defend the Catholic faith. **Pray** especially for Church leaders and bishops who have the responsibility for guiding the Church in this time of crisis, and for Catholic women, that their faith and commitment to the Church may be strengthened. Read and study, to increase your understanding of Church teachings. Become familiar with recent Church documents and Papal writings. **Familiaris Consortio** is a good place to start. (*Write **Daughters of St. Paul**, 50 St. Paul's Ave., Boston, MA 02130, for inexpensive copies of all official documents.*)
6. Join your diocesan Council of Catholic Women or Council of the Laity, and encourage others to participate in these meetings, if you can. You may be able to suggest good speakers and projects for these groups, which are supported by the diocese.
7. Consider having a one-day "mini-conference" in your area. Contact us for suggestions about speakers, planning, etc.
8. Contact other women in your area for mutual support and group prayer and study.
9. If you are a Religious, or know a sister or nun who needs encouragement and help, we suggest contacting the **Consortium Perfectae Caritatis** or the **Institute on Religious Life**.

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TESTIMONY OF WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY

Since October, 1984, when the circulation of the AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN began, several thousand letters from women have been received by Women for Faith & Family. A very high percentage of these letters include personal testimony about the meaning of the Catholic faith in their lives, about the current atmosphere of confusion within the Church, and how this affects them as individuals, and how it affects their families.

These letters reflect the women's varied experience and reveal that; 1) they have an overwhelming desire to affirm Catholic teaching (*nearly all letter writers have signed the AFFIRMATION and have helped to gather signatures to the statement in one way or another*); 2) that they recognize that the Church, far from being "oppressive", is, in fact, their source of strength to meet the challenges each encounters in her daily life; 3) that they enthusiastically support His Holiness, John Paul II, and the many courageous and faithful priests and bishops; 4) that they greatly desire increased personal holiness' and 5) that they recognize their important responsibility as Christians and as women to **witness** to their faith — to their families and to the world.

The letter writers represent a very broad spectrum of states of life, age, socio-economic background, intellectual and educational levels and political persuasions. Letters come from Religious women (*many from troubled Orders*) and lay women; single women, married women, women who are divorced or widowed; childless women and women with children — young or grown; from women who are in business or the professions, teachers, writers, lawyers, physicians, office workers, retired women; from women who work at home; from those whose political views range from "ultra-left" to "ultra-right"; and from women in all parts of the United States and from many other countries as well.

The common bond uniting all these women is, of course, their Catholic faith and their recognition of the critical importance of this faith in their lives. All the women who have signed the AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN — from the 29-year-old waitress with three small children, to the elderly, impoverished widow, to Mother Teresa of Calcutta — understand the current necessity for Catholic **women** to communicate their fidelity to the Church and her teachings to Catholic leaders and policy-makers, and to society as a whole.

By signing the AFFIRMATION, more than 40,000 Catholic women (as of July, 1987) have proven false the claim of a minority of women still claiming to be 'Catholic', but who reject not only the Church's constant teaching on many crucial matters, but also her **authority** to teach, to represent the collective view of Catholic women. AFFIRMATION signers recognize that this false claim can be maintained only so long as they, themselves, remain silent.

They also realize that the unchallenged claims of contemporary "feminists", whether inside or outside the Church, have had a devastating effect on society by viewing human life and human sexuality as "commodities" to be used or abused and controlled according to a disordered notion of human freedom and "self-fulfillment", and that 'women's liberation' and related ideologies which demand the total restructuring of society (*including the Church*) to conform to their notion of the meaning of human life and human freedom are actually **harmful** to women, rather than liberating, and destructive of families.

Such attitudes, in fact, deliberately erode the integrity of the Family, which is the basic unit of society and is the corporeal image or manifestation of the unity which exists in the God-

head and of the covenantal relationship between God and His people, of Christ and the Church.

The Family, as the fundamental source and the nurturing ground of all moral and ethical principles and of spiritual and religious attitudes, informs all social actions and influences every aspect of human life. Thus it is the Family which actually and most essentially forms and sustains the social order. Because of this, it is vital to the interest of a just society that the integrity and health of families be actively protected. The Family literally bears within it the continuum of human civilization and the future of the human race; therefore, disintegration of families inevitably leads to the disintegration of the social order which fails to provide them with the cultural support which helps to nourish them.

*. . . disintegration of families
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disintegration of the social order . . .*

CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN LETTERS

It is not surprising, then, that a majority of the letters express deep concern about contemporary issues within the Church and in society which challenge Church teachings, Church authority, and the Judeo-Christian principles which have provided the basis for our society. The letters reveal that ordinary women are conscious of the effect on families of widespread religious confusion and social disorientation. They realize that they, as women — mothers, teachers — are perhaps more centrally responsible for the moral and religious formation of children (hence, for the future of the Church and of humanity) than any other segment of society.

I Education

A predominant concern of letter writers is the education of children in all its aspects, especially in the crucial areas of catechetics and "family life" or "sex" education. They write of their experiences with their own children and their parish schools, and reveal grave concern that children are not receiving adequate moral and religious instruction; and, furthermore, that these programs (and those who administer them) are often perceived to actually **undermine** both Church teachings and the parents' primary role as educators of their children.

A frequent complaint about catechetical programs is that they are deficient or defective in presenting the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church, often downplay or even omit central Catholic doctrines, such as the Incarnation and Virgin Birth of Christ, the Resurrection, salvation, heaven, hell, etc. The presentations of ethical and moral issues, such as the proper role of Christians in social structures, sexual morality, etc., often omit the Church's teaching, emphasizing the "right" of "individual conscience" over legitimate Church authority; and substitute for Church teaching and explanations for same the views of the textbook authors, theologians, "experts" and individual teachers.

Concern about "sex-education" is very widespread. Chief among the complaints expressed in the letters is: 1) that most of the widely used textbooks are seriously defective, presenting "too much too soon", and inadequately presenting and explaining the Church's teaching on marriage, divorce, contraception, homosexuality, abortion, etc.; 2) that "lip service" only is given to the parents' right to instruct their children. "Consultations" which may be held before a "sex-ed"

Based On Letters Received From October, 1984 To July, 1987

program is initiated in the parish school are frequently criticized as being manipulated in such a way as to exclude parents who "dissent" from the program being promoted. It is not uncommon for a parent who objects to a child's participation in a particular classroom sex-education program to be publicly ridiculed, and the child forced to sit in the hall during the objectionable instruction.

Several parents who have communicated with us have moved to another parish to avoid a situation which they perceive to be dangerous to the well-being of their children. Others feel helpless to do anything about the situation, having unsuccessfully appealed to their pastor, their bishop or diocesan school officials. They are also inclined to be silent, not only because they want to avoid humiliation, but because they fear "reprisals" against their children by resentful teachers or school officials and because their children might suffer embarrassment. Still other parents have chosen to send their children to public schools, apparently hoping to avoid formal religious instruction altogether rather than to risk mis-information; and many are now "home-schooling" their children for the same reason.

The many letters received on this subject indicate that parents recognize the strong influence of Catholic schools and teachers over their children, which many now find to be predominantly negative. They can no longer count on the larger society to support their heritage of Judeo-Christian principles; furthermore, they fear that the Catholic school may further erode, rather than reinforce, these principles; may, in fact, encourage children to reject legitimate parental and Church authority in all matters dealing with religious convictions and moral attitudes.

II Effects of Feminism

The letters reveal that many women feel isolated, marginalized, alienated and 'oppressed' — not by the **Church**, but by many in leadership roles in the Church, especially women. People tell us repeatedly, "I thought I was the only one. . ."; and express great encouragement at learning that they may not be in the minority after all. They regard feminism as a particular threat to the Church and to their families, and resent the stereotyping of believing Catholic women as ignorant "victims of the patriarchy" unable to think clearly or critically about Church or social issues. (It is surely worth noting that the Pro-Life movement in the United States is predominantly a movement of Catholic women.)

*There is an enormous need
for teaching
of Catholic doctrine . . .*

The majority of faithful Catholics — women and men — may not always be able to articulate clearly their concerns; nevertheless, they understand quite well the hostility to the Church and its Tradition expressed by feminists of both sexes, and they often experience directly, through their families, the deleterious effects of the dominance of feminist (and other 'liberationist') views among religious professionals which directly contradict Church teachings.

There is also widespread concern that many pastors and some bishops are unresponsive to the legitimate questioning of policies and practices of Church officials, especially in education, liturgy and in para-parochial activities such as RENEW, the DeSales program, etc. (Whatever the intention of

these "small-group" or "base community" activities, in practice they are frequently a vehicle for promoting particular, uniformly "leftist" political points of view and social policies which may be in contradiction to Church teaching. In addition, their effect on parishes is more often divisive than unitive.)

Many believe that the priests and bishops listen only to the feminists and "liberals" on their staffs, and that they too easily succumb to pressure from the religious professionals and to the fear of "bad publicity" in making decisions affecting their parishes or dioceses. They want bishops and priests to show courage and wisdom in defense of the Faith in **all** matters, not just on the comparatively safe abortion issue. The sense of mistrust of and betrayal by Church officials is increasing. Some people find themselves in the apparently paradoxical position of affirming Church authority, while criticizing an individual priest or bishop who seems to accommodate dissent from Church teachings.

III Sacraments

With respect to the Sacraments of the Church, the chief concern expressed in the letters is the effort of feminists to undermine the structure of the Church by promoting the false idea that the ordained priesthood should be available to any baptized person, male or female.

They correctly see the relevance of seemingly peripheral issues, such as altar girls and "inclusive" language, to the questioning of the restriction of the ordained priesthood to men, and perceive the efforts to promote altar girls and the elimination of "sexist language" from the liturgy as the unvarnished stratagems of feminists to achieve the symbolically crucial goal of the "ordination" of women.

In general, objections to women as lectors and eucharistic ministers seem to arise from a perception that many of the individual women who hold these offices are making a "feminist" statement, rather than from categorical objection to women's performing these roles *per se*.

There is also a justifiable concern that traditional roles of women in the Church, such as altar work and volunteer religious instruction of children and other services traditionally performed by women, are now viewed with contempt by the women who demand "leadership" (power) roles in the Church, rather than service to the Church. The discontinuation of para-liturgical devotions in most American parishes, and the neglect of Mary has reinforced this attitude of devaluation of "woman's work".

We are convinced, from evidence in the letters, that some clear statement on the subject of ordination, and the distinction between the "priesthood of all believers" and the ordained priesthood, has become absolutely necessary. We have reports that many practicing Catholics "accept all Church teachings", except the exclusion of women from the priesthood. They have been convinced that this exclusion has no theological basis, and is the direct result of oppressive attitudes towards women by an all-male hierarchy; and that "justice" demands that women be treated "equally." (It is also quite clear that 'equality' is confused with 'identity' in this, as in other areas.) This false notion is common, and the confusion will continue to grow until the Church speaks authoritatively and definitively on these matters.

There is an enormous need for teaching of Catholic doctrine from the pulpits. Catholic apologetics has rarely been in a state of such decay; and lay people often find themselves ill-equipped to defend Church teachings. The lack of teaching leaves people vulnerable to influences — either within or outside the

Church, and from either the "left" or the "right" — which are positively dangerous; and leaves Catholic parents without adequate help in instructing their children in the Faith. Almost as injurious and demoralizing as actual false teaching is no teaching at all. The Catholic laity — and especially young people — come to the Church seeking Truth: the Truth which only the Church teaches.

The letters reveal areas where the need for an expanded effort to explain Church teachings is greatest.

RECOMMENDATIONS — PART I

1. Re-emphasize the educational principles enunciated in the documents of Vatican II and **Familiaris Consortio** regarding the rights and responsibilities of parents as primary educators of their children.
2. Review catechetical and sex-education texts and programs in current use. Bishops should exercise great caution before giving Imprimatur to these programs. A central commission of the Holy See might approve all texts and programs, rather than local bishops.
3. Set up a channel of communication which would assure parents of sound advice and support for their legitimate concern about religious and moral education of their children.

Publish a universal catechism (including moral education) with approval from the Holy See, and require all textbooks and programs to conform to its norms.

RECOMMENDATIONS — PARTS II & III

1. Provide explicit authoritative teaching on the nature of the Church, the nature of Christ, the nature of the ordained priesthood and the relationship between the clergy and the laity.
2. Emphasize the eschatological message of the Church the necessity for salvation, conversion, personal holiness.
3. Re-emphasize teachings of Vatican II regarding the liturgy.
4. Provide universal liturgical guidelines for bishops, parish priests and "lay ministers", and require conformity to these guidelines.
5. Encourage revival of para-liturgical devotions, use of sacramentals, use of traditional music at Masses celebrated in a Church, renewed reverence for the Sacrament.
6. Exercise extreme caution on the matter of amending liturgical texts to eliminate "sexist" language. It is not correct to assume that 'Catholic Women' (in any collective sense) prefer "non-sexist" language as defined by feminists, or feel "excluded" when inclusive pronouns and collective nouns such as 'men', 'brethren' and 'mankind' are used. Very many women, however, perceive that the apparent concession to feminist demands by some bishops in this or other matters can only be destructive, damaging and divisive, even if its intent may have been chivalrous on the part of the bishop(s).

Even if it is not the message intended, when representatives of the hierarchy seem to hear and respond only to the complaints of feminist women signals are given that only these women and their ideological views are worthy of consideration. This causes deep distress among the majority of faithful Catholics - women and men - whose desire to cooperate with bishops and whose need for support from the officials and leaders of the Church is exceeded only by their love for the Church and their willingness to fulfil their proper mission in the Church and in the world.

7. In the matter of including girls as altar servers, careful consideration should be given to the symbolic message which would be conveyed by any change on the present rules. Inevitably this would be regarded by many as the first step in the process of radically changing the structure of the Church by admitting women to the ordained priesthood. Such an action, if

it were taken at the present time of confusion and conflict in the Church, could only give false hope to feminists and other liberationists that it will be only a matter of time before their goals will be accomplished. A change in the present rules regarding altar servers can only exacerbate, not alleviate, the current divisions in the Church. Because this issue is so highly charged, we are convinced that it would be a very grave mistake to change the rules or to suggest that because the illicit practice may be in place in some parishes that it should be permitted.

CONCLUSION

The overwhelming evidence of the thousands of letters received by WOMEN FOR FAITH AND FAMILY during the past three years is that the real issues of concern to most Catholic women have not been represented by the self-appointed spokesmen for 'women in the Church.'

Much of the current conflict within the Church and in society has been generated by distorted notions of humanity promoted by ideological feminism, as well as other ideologies inimical to Christianity. Because much of this conflict and confusion has been focused on the role of women in society and the Church, the AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN was intended as a means for providing a voice for women who are not feminist ideologues, therefore, whose experience and knowledge of life is much broader than could be represented by any minority "interest group."

We hope that the evident willingness of the faithful daughters of the Church to speak out on issues involving our Faith and our families, and to act on their convictions, may be helpful in promoting a restoration of Christian moral order to the society in which we live, and, because of women's role in the moral and religious formation of our children, may beneficially affect the future of the Church.

It would be a great mistake, however, to omit addressing the men who make up the other half of the human race and without whom families cannot be established. Men have been victims, often enough with their own complicity, of the same disordered attitudes towards human life and the relationship of human beings with each other and with God as those which have afflicted women. Their disordered attitudes affect human society, the Faith and their families, at least as much as do women's. Men's ideas and attitudes have, in fact, inspired much of the 'sexual revolution' and alien ideologies (including feminism itself) which have harmed both the Church and our culture.

THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD IN ST. LOUIS

"To Magnify the Lord: Women's Role in the Modern World" was the theme of the Third Annual Women for Faith & Family Conference held October 2-4, 1987 in St. Louis. A highlight of the conference, attended by about 200 men and women from the U.S. and Canada, was the reading of a message and Apostolic Blessing from Pope John Paul II and a message from Mother Teresa.

The Keynote Address on Friday evening was given by The Most Rev. A. James Quinn, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland, and Anne Roche Mugeridge of Welland, Ontario, spoke at the banquet on Saturday.

Other conference addresses were given by The Rev. Richard Roach, S.J., of Marquette University who spoke on "The Marian Vocation," Donna Steichen of St. Cloud, MN, Mother Assumpta Long, O.P. of Nashville, TN, Dr. James Hitchcock of St. Louis University, and Helen Hull Hitchcock. We also heard from the WFF Staff who attended the Holy Father's talk to the U.S. Laity in San Francisco in September.

We were privileged to have our Masses celebrated at the St. Louis Cathedral with His Eminence, John Joseph, Cardinal Carberry, and The Most Rev. Charles Koester, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis as celebrants and homilists.

All sessions of the conference were taped. For tape order forms, write to ACTS, 1025 E. Clayton Rd., Ballwin, MO 63011, or write to Women for Faith & Family.

FOURTH ANNUAL WFF CONFERENCE

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

October 14-16, 1988

CHASE PARK PLAZA HOTEL
St. Louis, MO

Masses at the St. Louis Cathedral

For registration & program details, mark the "1988 Conference" box on the enclosed envelope.

WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY AT THE SYNOD

Helen Hull Hitchcock, representing Women for Faith & Family in Rome during the recent Synod on the Laity, presented the AFFIRMATION FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN with the latest list of compiled signatures from women supporting the Holy Father and the Magisterium to Cardinal Edouard Gagnon, Pro-prefect of the Pontifical Council on the Family.

Cardinal Gagnon received the AFFIRMATION and list of signers along with testimony based on the thousands of letters received by Women for Faith & Family on behalf of Pope John Paul II at a press conference outside the Synod gates on Friday, October 23, 1987. The testimony had been prepared for the American Bishop delegates to the synod. (See *Testimony*, Page 4)

Other AFFIRMATION signers who were in Rome for the Synod and present for its presentation were Margaret Butts and Prue Oldham, of WFF-Australia; Angela Grimm, Washington; Pat Haney, Baton-Rouge; Kathleen Sullivan and Georgeann Pyke, Chicago; and Dolores Mills, Milwaukee.

As a result of the press conference, a story appeared in the Italian newspaper, *Avvenire* (October 24, 1987), featuring a picture of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, an AFFIRMATION signer. It bore a headline "40 MILA DONNE DICONO NO" (Forty-thousand women say 'No'), referring to the "priesthood" for women. Increased "ministries" in the Church for women and girls had been publicized as a topic being discussed and considered by Synod delegates; but the list of "propositions" to be voted on by Synod delegates during the final week of the Synod did not include the suggestion made by some American bishops to permit girl "altar servers."

"We believe that each and every signer of the AFFIRMATION has made a difference - the difference of moral support and encouragement to the embattled leaders of the Church," said Helen Hull Hitchcock. "This may seem to be a small contribution, but we are convinced that the Church needs us now - especially needs the faithful witness of Catholic women - more than ever before. This effort seems the least we can do."

Collection of signatures to the AFFIRMATION will continue indefinitely; and the effort is being extended to other countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES

We would like to encourage you to write to your local bishop. Bishops need information. They need to know your concerns and they, like the rest of us, need encouragement. We think that it is important for our Church leaders to hear from you as individuals, and that this is one way in which we can help them. Perhaps the most useful letters are those which observe the "ABCs" of **Accuracy, Brevity, and Charity**.

Following are some addresses you may find useful. Others you may get from the Catholic Directory (*your parish office should have one*), the Catholic Almanac (*published by Our Sunday Visitor*), or from your local library. We hope you will send us a copy of your letters for our files.

The Most Rev. John L. May, Chairman
National Council of Catholic Bishops
4445 Lindell Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63108

"Your Excellency:" or "Dear Archbishop May:"

IN MEMORIAM

Memorial donations have been received by Women for Faith & Family as follows:

In honor of ANN O'DONNELL,
from friends and relatives

In honor of CELESTE MOORMAN,
from Theodore A. Moorman

In honor of PEARL McENENY,
from friends and relatives

Requiescat in pace, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

The Most Rev. Pio Laghi
Pro-Nuncio to the United States
3339 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, D. C. 20008-3687
("Your Excellency:" or "Dear Archbishop Laghi:")

The Most Rev. Paul Cordes
Pontifical Council on the Laity VATICAN CITY STATE
("Dear Bishop Cordes:")

His Eminence, Edouard, Cardinal Gagnon
Pro-Prefect, Pontifical Council on the Family
VATICAN CITY STATE
("Your Eminence:")

The Most Rev. Joseph Imesch, Chairman
NCCB Committee on Women in Society & in the Church
425 Summit St. Joliet, IL 60435
("Dear Bishop Imesch:")

(Other members of the NCCB committee on the "pastoral response to women's concerns", are: **The Most Rev. Alfred C. Hughes**, Aux. Bishop of Boston-Lowell Region, 70 Lawrence, Lowell, MA 01852; **The Most Rev. Matthew Clark**, Bishop of Rochester, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624; **The Most Rev. William Levada**, Archbishop of Portland, 2838 E. Burnside St., Portland OR, 97214; **The Most Rev. Thomas Grady**, Bishop of Orlando, PO Box 1800, Orlando FL 32802; and **The Most Rev. Amadee Proulx**, Auxiliary Bishop of Portland, 510 Ocean Ave. PO Box 6750, Portland, ME 04103.)

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

St. Louis, Mo. 63132
P.O. Box 8326
Women for Faith & Family



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40 mila donne dicono no

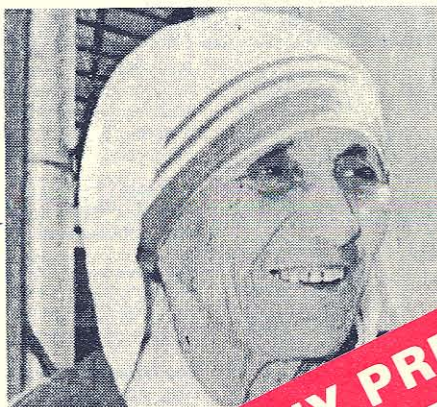
E' stato presentato ieri ai padri sinodali un primo testo delle «prepositiones» redatto dal segretario speciale mons. Pierre Eyt insieme ai relatori dei 12 «circoli minori». E' stato anche proposto da mons. Castrillon Hoyos un primo abbozzo del messaggio del Sinodo al popolo di Dio. Oggi pomeriggio il cardinale Thiaudoum e il segretario speciale, insieme ai 12 relatori, appronteranno le proposte da sottoporre ai padri.

di Luigi Offeddu

ROMA. Un segnale a sorpresa giunge dal mondo femminile, e ribalta i termini della polemica sul sacerdozio «proibito» alla donna. E a sorpresa, questo segnale, anche e soprattutto perché molti giornali hanno accreditato negli ultimi tempi — basti ricordare le cronache sul viaggio papale negli Stati Uniti — l'immagine di un mondo femminile in grave fermento, e tutto unito nel contestare il «monopolio maschile della tonaca». E invece, ecco quarantamila donne in gran parte nate e residenti negli Stati Uniti, che sottoscrivono un documento in cui si appoggia pienamente la dottrina della Chiesa: fra esse, la madre Teresa di Calcutta.

mento «Women for faith and family» («Donne per la fede e la famiglia») al cardinale Edouard Gagnon, prefetto del Consiglio vaticano per la famiglia, perché lo faccia arrivare sulla scrivania del Papa. A guidare la delegazione delle donne era Helen Hull Hitchcock, rappresentante la sezione australiana dello stesso movimento.

Probabilmente, la notizia aggiungerà benzina al fuoco delle polemiche che mai da mesi divampano intorno all'argomento. Ma un fatto si può ricordare è tener presente fin d'ora. Durante il viaggio settembrino di Giovanni Paolo II negli Stati Uniti, gli osservatori più attenti notarono una sorta di divaricazione nell'opinione pubblica americana: da una parte,



Madre Teresa di Calcutta

ieri in Vaticano sembrerebbe confermare che l'ala contestatrice del cattolicesimo americano non ha una rappresentatività assoluta, ed anzi — con buona pace di qualche teologo e intellettuale di grido — deve convivere con altre posizioni, assai più vicine a Roma.

Ma veniamo al testo del documento consegnato al cardinale Gagnon. Le 40 mila firme, il rifiuto dell'aborto — considerato come un omicidio volontario di esseri umani non ancora nati — e confermata l'adesione agli insegnamenti del magistero della Chiesa in tema di matrimonio, famiglia, riproduzione

«Crediamo — si aggiunge — che qualsiasi tentativo

sacerdozio è intrinsecamente legato ai rappresentanti della creatività di uomini e donne — le quali partecipano alla vita di Dio e del mondo».

«Crediamo — si aggiunge — che qualsiasi tentativo

Le «Donne per la fede e per la famiglia»

AFFIRMATION, TESTIMONY PRESENTED IN ROME!

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- Update on WFF Activities
- International News
- Excerpt from Testimony for Synod on the Laity
- 1988 Conference
- MORE . . .