



## WOMEN'S GROUPS ISSUE STATEMENT ON FEMINISM, LANGUAGE, LITURGY

### "ALTAR GIRLS" AND "INCLUSIVE" LANGUAGE CALLED 'DIVISIVE'

Three organizations of Catholic women, **Women for Faith & Family**, *Consortium Perfectae Caritatis* and the **Forum of Major Superiors of the Institute on Religious Life** have jointly issued a Statement on Feminism, Language and Liturgy. Released April 18, the ten-point statement reaffirms the constant teaching of the Catholic Church on the priesthood, registers concern "about the pervasive influence and destructive effects" of radical feminism, and objects to "ideologically motivated" language and liturgical innovations such as the use of female "altar servers" or homilists. (*Complete text of 'Statement...' inside, pages 6-7.*)

The Forum of Major Superiors consists of heads of women's religious orders of the Institute on Religious Life, organized in 1974 to promote vocations and the teachings of the Church on religious life. The Forum's president is Sr. Assumpta Long, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of Nashville. Sister Assumpta addressed the 1987 WFF Conference.

*Consortium Perfectae Caritatis* was founded in 1971 to encourage the development of religious life

in line with Vatican II and related directives. Sr. Mary Elise, SND, is President of the Consortium and its Administrative Council.

Last June the three groups issued a joint statement on the first draft of the 'women's pastoral.'

#### Related Action...

Women for Faith & Family has also responded to very recent reports that the Vatican is considering granting permission to U.S. Bishops to change liturgical norms in order to permit girl or women "altar servers." In a letter addressed to the Congregation for Divine Worship and other Vatican officials, WFF raised several non-theological objections to changing the traditional liturgical practice of the Church.

"We urge women to speak out on this issue now," said Helen Hull Hitchcock. "Although it may be considered a minor issue, the proposed changes are profoundly symbolic, and could have a devastating effect on the Church."

(*See related stories in this issue.*)

## HOPE FOR PRO-LIFE RULING ON MISSOURI LAW

"The Missouri case, Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services, gives the U.S. Supreme Court the opportunity to reconsider their 1973 abortion ruling on Roe vs. Wade," declared Andrew Puzder, St. Louis attorney and principal author of the contested Missouri law, at a meeting sponsored by Women for Faith and Family on Wednesday evening, April 19. "Should the Court decide to overturn its 1973 decision, it could return to the States the ability to regulate abortion," he said. The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services, beginning April 26.

Puzder was the guest speaker at the meeting

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# inside voices...

"Sheer plod makes plow down scillion shine." This line from Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem, 'The Windover, to Christ Our Lord' evokes powerful images — of toil and of the reason we labor. We may grow weary with our 'plodding'; the 'furrow' we attempt to plow may seem endless and the hard-packed earth resistant. But the poet suggests that nothing but "sheer plod" — long and arduous labor, which may seem unrewarding at the time — can accomplish the task.

Our Lord said "the harvest is heavy, but the laborers are few." Few, indeed, are willing to "take up His yoke", especially if it means interrupting our own plans for our lives. Those who attempt to do it are often tempted to succumb to weariness. We may become angry with conditions that make our labor necessary or more difficult. When others are unwilling or unable to help us we may become discouraged and resentful. When those we depend on to support our efforts fail us, we may feel, isolated, alone. When the results of our toil seem invisible, and all our best efforts seem not to penetrate the stony ground, we are exhausted and even our faith may flag.

These are temptations that we must try to resist. Our eyes must be fixed on the reason for our "sheer plod": to prepare the Earth for the Sower, in order that the seeds of His Word, His liberating Truth, may fall on fertile ground, and may produce a "heavy harvest." This harvest, in fact, we may never see in our lifetime; but working to produce it is, nevertheless, our primary duty and responsibility as Christians.

We may be called to "take up His yoke" in different ways. Hundreds of thousands have worked in the pro-life movement, struggled and, yes, suffered, to protect the lives of unborn children from torture and death. Now, these laborers pray that their work may bear fruit in the reversal of the 1973 Supreme Court decision which led to the killing of millions of children. The oral hearings for the review of the lower court decision on the Missouri law (*Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services*) began April 26. The Supreme Court review of this case will continue for several months. WFF has written to each Justice, and our letter is reproduced in this issue.

Many of the same people who have labored so valiantly for human life are also diligently working and praying to defend the Catholic Church and her life-giving Sacraments and teachings, her doctrine and her disciplines, against attack from the outside and collapse from within. We are convinced that this is no mere "sectarian" Catholic concern. The influence of the Catholic Church on all Christians, Catholic or non-

Catholic, is unparalleled. In a real sense, what happens in the Catholic Church in America will occur sooner or later to Catholics in other countries, and will affect other Christian bodies throughout the world as well.

This issue of VOICES focuses on both these critical Catholic concerns. We have added four pages to give you more information and, we hope, some ideas and inspiration for your own action and your prayers. We are most grateful for the donations which made the extra pages possible.

Although it can be argued that the Christian faith has never been so severely challenged at any time since the Reformation as it is in our time, it is also clear from Scripture that this is to be expected.

The Apostle Peter's words seem particularly relevant to our situation when he cautioned, *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:12-13)*

We must be willing, then, to undergo the plodding tedium of toil ourselves, and to encourage those who are weary. Such exercise of the spirit will surely help us learn to bear real anguish, whether physical or spiritual, that may become necessary as we prepare God's field for the Ultimate Harvest.

May Our Lord's Blessed Mother, Mary, intercede for the Church and for all unborn children especially during this month of May which is named in her honor.



**Please join with others in a  
Novena for the Unborn**  
(Prayers for Novena on last page this issue)

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## WFF RECEIVES GRANT AT MCL CONVENTION



Ann O'Donnell

Women for Faith and Family is one of the first recipients of a \$500 grant from the Ann O'Donnell Memorial Fund. Ann O'Donnell, who died in 1986, was one of the founders of Women for Faith & Family and a leader of pro-life activities well-known for her spirited defense of life, her unflagging energy, and her devotion to the Catholic Church. Income from the fund will help provide "seed money" for pro-life and pro-family projects.

The award was formally presented by Pat Hanley at the Missouri Citizens for Life Convention in Jefferson City April 1, and was received on behalf of WFF by Joanne Bick. The grant will be used for purchase of computer equipment.

The main workshop at the convention focused on the Missouri case now before the Supreme Court, *Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services*. Reproductive Health Services is an abortion clinic in St. Louis.

Andrew Puzder, of Lawyers for Life in St. Louis, and Samuel Lee, the pro-life lobbyist to the Missouri legislature, have guided litigation through many cases and appeals under the leadership of Missouri's Attorney General William Webster. The result is the strong "life begins at conception" case being argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. (See interview Puzder, page 4.)



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**ENGLAND** - Helen Hull Hitchcock addressed a group of about thirty Catholic women who are planning to form an association like Women for Faith & Family in Great Britain. The meeting was organized by Joanna Bogle, who spoke at the 1988 WFF Conference in St. Louis. The question period following Mrs. Hitchcock's talk revealed a striking similarity between the U. S. and Britain in most matters concerning women, family life, religious education, and liturgical matters.

**INDIA** - Dr. Sr. Catherine Bernard, who visited WFF in 1986, is the Executive Director of the Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture (SERFAC). The organization is dedicated to promoting the well-being of the family. Formerly known as the Tamil Nadu Family Development Centre, SERFAC will expand its pro-family programs, including seminars, training courses and week-end programs on contraception, abortion, NFP and other issues for the general public of Madras.

**ITALY** - 'The catechesis of John Paul II on human love', the first course of the current term of the **John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family**, is being given by Msgr. Carlo Caffarra, director of the Institute. For further information: CORSO ISTRUZIONE PER LA FAMIGLIA, Via F. Gentile 5, 61032 Fano, ITALY.

**NIGERIA** - The Archdiocese of Onitsha, Nigeria has "over 250 senior seminarians and nearly a thousand junior ones", according to Archbishop Stephen Ezeanya. "I ordained 13 priests last year and will, please God, ordain 12 in August this year." Many seminarians come from poor families. To make a donation for the support of these seminarians, address ARCHDIOCESE OF ONITSHA ACCOUNT # 888-1-254364, Chase Manhattan Bank, NA; Rockefeller Plaza and 49th St., NY, NY 10020.

**NEW ZEALAND** - The New Zealand Bishops' Commission for Justice, Peace and Development has a grant of \$30,000. to initiate a "sexism survey". Christine Cheyne, a founder of a feminist group, Sophia Catholic Women's Network, has been commissioned to do the survey and to prepare a document which would form the basis of the Church's 1990 Lenten program. Ms. Cheyne told the *New Zealand Herald* last October that "The fact that women can't be ordained seems to be rather a conservative position....made without wide consultation—especially with people who are affected, like women themselves."

For information about WFF's activities in New Zealand, contact: CONNIE PURDUE, 21 Sylvan Avenue, Northcote, Auckland 9, New Zealand.



## WFF INTERVIEWS AUTHOR OF PRO-LIFE TEST CASE

*Andrew Puzder, an attorney in St. Louis, wrote the first part of the Missouri law stating that life begins at conception.. He has offered legal guidance to Missouri pro-lifers since he graduated from law school in the late '70s. Puzder wrote an Amicus Curiae (friends of the court) brief now before the U.S. Supreme Court. Recently, WFF interviewed Puzder about the case now before the U.S. Supreme Court.*

**WFF:** What is Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services about?

**AP:** It's a challenge by an abortion clinic and some doctors in the State of Missouri to a law that the Missouri legislature enacted in 1986 which essentially has three parts.

The first part is the statute which provides rights to unborn children in areas such as criminal law, property law, and personal injury law. This first portion is not an abortion law but rather a law that deals with rights for unborn children. It states that life begins at conception and this is the language that is being challenged.

The second part of the law amends Missouri's abortion statutes to make them consistent with some Supreme Court cases that have come down in the area. In this portion, all that is before the court right now is whether Missouri's declaration as to when a child is viable is proper.

The third part of the law deals with public funding and states that Missouri should not spend its money to counsel or encourage abortions. It also prohibits people who work for the state of Missouri from encouraging abortion in the course of their employment.

**WFF:** What is the most controversial part of the statute and why?

**AP:** The part that seems to be getting the most attention is the declaration that life begins at conception. I think that gets so much attention because of the danger it poses for the pro-choice movement. The pro-choice people are always trying to paint pro-lifers as religious fanatics — that is, people who aren't really very scientific or intellectual, trying to impose their religious beliefs on other people. The pro-choice attempt to paint pro-lifers in this way is totally thwarted by this declaration that life begins at conception, because the declaration is a statement of simple scientific, medical fact which demonstrates very clearly that abortion is the taking of human life. This is not a religious question or a philosophical question; it's a simple medical, scientific question.

**WFF:** If that's the case, then, why doesn't Missouri have the right to define when life begins?

**AP:** Well, Missouri has the right to define when life begins, we believe, in areas other than the area of abortion. The reason it can't define when life begins for abortion law purposes is because in 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe vs. Wade* stated that a state could not adopt a theory of when life begins to justify its abortion statute. Other states have attempted to define life as beginning at conception as part of their abortion statutes. When those statutes have been challenged, the court has stricken them down.

The Missouri law takes a different approach. It says that life begins at conception, but not in the abortion context. It says life begins at conception for

purposes of criminal law, property law, and personal injury law, but excludes abortion.

**WFF:** What are the options that the Supreme Court has in deciding this case?

**AP:** The Supreme Court could, for example, declare the personhood of the unborn child — that is, declare that unborn children are persons under the Constitution. In that case I would think that states would have to provide protection for unborn children. In other words, it would be a complete reversal of *Roe vs. Wade*, which now utterly prohibits states from providing any protection for unborn children in the area of abortion. If the Supreme Court declared the personhood of the child, it would also be compelled to provide protection.

A second alternative is that the court could return the question of whether abortion should be legal or illegal, or the extent to which it should be regulated, to the states. This is what we think is possible and this is really what we're shooting for.

The third possibility is that the court could do nothing. That is, keep *Roe vs. Wade* and not change the law on abortion at all. If they do that, we will be no worse off now than we were before we started the case.

**WFF:** In the second case, if the Supreme Court returns the question of abortion to the States, can *Roe vs. Wade* stand or must it be struck down?

**AP:** I think that *Roe vs. Wade* decision would have to be reversed in order to return to the States the question of whether abortion is legal.

**WFF:** What do you think the Court will do?

**AP:** I don't really have a strong feeling about what they'll do. It's very difficult to tell because we have new appointments by President Reagan. These new appointments certainly give us grounds to feel encouraged, on the one hand. On the other hand, no one really knows what these people will decide. There is some question about what Sandra Day O'Connor will do. So really, it's up in the air. But, no matter what happens, I think it will be a 5 to 4 vote. In my opinion, our best scenario is that the Supreme Court will return the question to the States. The worst scenario is that they won't do anything at all.

**WFF:** And if they don't do anything, what hope do we have for the future?

**AP:** President Bush has stated that he is pro-life and during his term he will appoint some Supreme Court justices. We're hopeful that he'll appoint people who are pro-life and we'll keep pushing this issue until we win.

**WFF:** So you expect to stay in the fight?

**AP:** Yes. Until the state is free to legislate with the fact in mind that life begins at conception, I think we have to continue the fight.



**COPY OF LETTER FROM WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY  
TO CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST ON 'WEBSTER VS. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES'**

(SIMILAR LETTERS WERE SENT TO ALL JUSTICES. FOR ADDRESSES  
OF THE SUPREME COURT JUSTICES, SEE PAGE 9)

March 30, 1989

The Honorable William H. Rehnquist  
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court  
1 First Street N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20543

Dear Justice Rehnquist:

On behalf of the more than 40,000 women associated with Women for Faith and Family, we wish to indicate our support for a Supreme Court decision to uphold the State of Missouri in the imminent review of Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services.

In the sixteen years since the Roe vs. Wade decision paved the way for permissive legal abortion in the United States, hence, even if unintentionally, led to questioning the intrinsic value of all human life, it has become clear to all that the critical question is no longer whether an unborn child is a human life, for that biological fact is now generally conceded even by those who advocate permissive abortion. The questions now confronting us are what worth this nation places on life, whether in or out of the womb; what intrinsic rights must be accorded every individual, of whatever stage of life, by virtue of his being human; and, specifically, whether a State has the right to enact legislation or render judgments to protect human life.

These are questions of extreme significance, the full import of which may not have been adequately understood by many at the time of the Supreme Court decision on Roe vs. Wade. The worth and meaning of human life is a fundamental question which transcends all sectarian religious beliefs and lies at the heart of all moral and ethical systems.

In light of the great increase in both biological and sociological information relevant to the question of abortion since its 1973 decision, the Supreme Court of the United States now has the opportunity and the responsibility to reconsider and to render judgment on this grave matter, in full realization that its decision will impinge deeply on the millions of lives of present and future generations of Americans.

May your decision, Justice Rehnquist, proceed from a genuine commitment to the freedom and dignity of all human lives entrusted to this nation's care. And may God, in Whom our country trusts, inspire and guide you, now and in the future.

Respectfully yours,

*Helen Hull Hitchcock*

Helen Hull Hitchcock, President  
Women for Faith & Family



# BISHOP ISSUES DIRECTIVE ON "ALTAR GIRLS"

"Having altar girls has made the liturgy itself, which is all for the praise and glory of God, a source of division among God's people and priests," said Bishop John Steinbock of Santa Rosa in a directive issued in February. "The Bishop has the responsibility to respond to this situation," he continued.

The bishop's seven-page statement reminds priests "of their serious obligation" to follow Church norms regarding the celebration of the Eucharist, whether or not they happen to "be in agreement" with those norms. He emphasizes "the central issue" of obedience, the priest's obligation to follow clear instructions on liturgical matters issued by the Vatican, and to act in unity with the Bishop in this, as in other matters.

The bishop offers some reasons for the Church's teaching on the matter of girl or women altar servers, and urges priests to present these explanations to the people to let them know that "the decision of not allowing women to serve at the altar...is not ...some arbitrary decision of ... Rome"

## Pastoral Advice

Bishop Steinbock advises his priests about handling the difficult situation when girls have been allowed to be servers. "Individual hurt and misunderstanding will inevitably arise," he noted. "But the divisiveness, confusion and condemnation that arises because of the use of altar girls cause a much greater hurt and misunderstanding among the priests and laity throughout the diocese.

"I pray that priests will help the parents of the girls now serving to help their daughters learn this deep Christian lesson of forsaking our own desires for the good of others."

Although he states that he has no personal "absolute certitude" about God's Will in the matter, he also says "I do know it is God's Will for Bishops and priests in their roles of leadership to follow the norms and laws of the Church."

## Division among Bishops

Bishop Steinbock notes that some of the Bishops of the United States "spoke in favor of altar girls at the recent Synod on the Laity. But he also notes that "many of the Bishops from the third world spoke strongly against altar girls, since most of their vocations to the priesthood came from altar boys, and they believe it could lead to a scarcity of vocations for them."

He observes that the Pope must consider the whole world, because "what is done in one country can have a great effect on the other countries," and emphasizes the influential role of the United States on the Catholic Church throughout the world.

## Love, Respect, Obedience

The Bishop of Santa Rosa concludes his pastoral letter by saying that "Just as important as following the norm is the way that this norm is conveyed to the people in the parish. Love, respect, and obedience to the Holy Father, as well as to the Bishop, are more important than any individual's opinions and feelings concerning this. "

**Ed. Note:** In times less troubled and confused than our own it would not require heroic courage for a bishop to defend publicly the teachings or discipline of the Church. Yet most of us are aware that a statement like this will inevitably subject the bishop to harsh criticism from some Catholics. We believe that Bishop Steinbock's letter is an example of what the Holy Father meant when he told the American bishops that they must risk "martyrdom" to defend the Faith.

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## SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES

We encourage you to write to your local bishop and other Church leaders if you have a particular concern. They do need information, and we think that hearing from individuals is an important source of helpful information.

The most useful letters are those which follow the "ABCs": Accuracy, Brevity and CHARITY.

Following are some useful addresses. Others you may get from the Catholic Directory (your parish should have one), the Catholic Almanac (published by Our Sunday Visitor) or from your local library.

### The Most Rev. Pio Laghi Pro-Nuncio to the United States

3339 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20008-3687  
(Your Excellency, or 'Dear Archbishop Laghi')

### His Eminence, Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

VATICAN CITY STATE, EUROPE  
(Your Eminence)

### The Most Rev. Paul Cordes Pontifical Council on the Laity

VATICAN CITY STATE, EUROPE  
(Dear Bishop Cordes)

### His Eminence, Edouard, Cardinal Gagnon Prefect, Pontifical Council on the Family

VATICAN CITY STATE, EUROPE  
(Your Eminence)

### Su Eminencia, Eduardo, Cardenal Martinez Somalo

### Congregación para el Culto Divino y la Disciplina de los Sacramentos\*

CITTA DEL VATICANO, EUROPA

\*Congregation for Divine Worship

(Note: Cardinal Martinez Somalo is Spanish-speaking. Write in Spanish, if possible.)

### 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')



## WFF - CPC TO HOLD 'TANDEM' CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER

Women for Faith & Family and Consortium Perfectae Caritatis will hold twin conferences at the Chase Hotel in St. Louis the weekend of October 6-8. Plans are being made to have several joint sessions, and the two groups will worship together at Masses.

Leaders of both organizations view this unique venture as a milestone in promoting stronger connections between religious and lay women who are faithful to the Church and her teachings. They expect that strengthening these ties will bear fruit in future co-operative actions and in greater understanding of the Church's need for women's various vocations. In addition it will foster closer fellowship between lay and religious women through prayer and action.

Among the speakers who will be addressing WFF and CPC are Mary Ellen (Mrs. Robert) Bork; Rita Marker, of the Human Life Center; and an American representative to the Pontifical Council on the Family; Juli Loesch Wiley, pro-life leader and writer; and Augustin, Cardinal Mayer, former head of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship.

The Consortium's director, The Rev. James Viall of Cleveland, is familiar to those who have attended past WFF conferences. He was a speaker in 1986, and has attended and assisted every conference. Sr. Mary Elise, SND, is President of the Consortium and its Advisory Council. The organization has representatives from about 45 communities of women religious. She is also associated with the Catholic Home Study Institute in Virginia.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE :

We think it is very important that we reach all who may want to hear from us. So we are sending this edition of VOICES, as we have the past two, not only to those who have already made a *donation* to Women for Faith & Family or have *asked* to be on our mailing list, but also to several hundred additional names from our "big list" of Affirmation signers not yet on the regular mailing list.

If this is your first issue and you wish to continue to receive VOICES, be sure to return the enclosed envelope with the appropriate box checked.

held to increase awareness of the Missouri case and to initiate nine days of prayer for its outcome.

"To prevent Missouri from recognizing that human life begins at conception, the Supreme Court will have to hold that state legislatures are constitutionally prohibited from recognizing a simple scientific fact," said Puzder. "A Court decision which prohibits the law from recognizing a relevant truth can only serve as a veil for injustice, diminishing the integrity of the judicial process."

Puzder listed options that the Supreme Court has in deciding the Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services case, and said that although he cannot predict the outcome, he and pro-lifers in the State of Missouri are optimistic that the question of whether abortion should be legal or illegal, or the extent to which it should be regulated, could be returned to the states. He said that if this happens, Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 ruling which legalized abortion in the United States, will most likely be struck down.

Helen Hull Hitchcock, President of Women for Faith and Family, read a letter the organization sent to the Supreme Court Justices urging them to uphold the State of Missouri in the case. Mrs. Hitchcock encouraged all present to write similar letters.

Puzder's talk was followed by a prayer service beginning a 'Novena for the Unborn', led by The Rev. Ralph Wright, OSB of the St. Louis Priory.

## SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

In case you plan to write to Justices regarding the current review of '*Webster vs. Reproductive Health...*', you may find this list helpful:

The Honorable William H. Rehnquist  
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court  
1 First Street N.E.

Washington, DC 20543

(Addresses of Associate Justices as above)

The Honorable	Harry A Blackmun
"	" Sandra Day O'Connor
"	" Antonin Scalia
"	" Thurgood Marshall
"	" William J. Brennan
"	" Anthony M. Kennedy
"	" John Paul Stevens
"	" Byron R. White.



# STATEMENT ON FEMINISM, LANGUAGE AND LITURGY

WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY, *CONSORTIUM PERFECTAE CARITATIS*., FORUM OF MAJOR SUPERIORS

Because we are Catholic women who accept and affirm all the teachings of the Catholic Church, not only as true propositions but as the norms of our thought and life;

Because we are aware of the influence within the Church and in society of alien ideologies which attack the fundamental assumptions of Christianity about human life and of the relationship of human beings with their Creator, and which effectively undermine the Catholic Church;

Because we understand our responsibility as Catholics and as women to witness to the truth which the Catholic Church teaches and our willing and free acceptance of her just and true authority vested in the Magisterium of the Church, particularly in Christ's vicar, the Pope, and Bishops in union with him, we believe it our duty to make the following statement:

1. In our time and culture, ideological feminism, which denies the fundamental psychic and spiritual distinctiveness of the sexes and which devalues motherhood and the nurturing role of women in the family and in society, is often misrepresented as expressing the collective belief of women. As women, we are particularly concerned about the pervasive influence and the destructive effects on the Church, on families and on society of this "feminism."

2. As Catholics who have been formed, inspired and sustained by the Sacraments of the Church through participation in the liturgy, the Church's central action and principal means of transmission of the Catholic faith, we are strongly aware of the power of symbol in human consciousness. We therefore deplore attempts to distort and transform language and liturgy, both of which make such

potent symbolic impressions on the human mind, to conform to a particular contemporary ideological agenda at odds with Catholic belief and practice.

3. We reaffirm our belief in the divine origin of the Church and that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which is often criticized in our time as insufficiently egalitarian, was intentionally established by Christ, and that He selected the Apostles and Peter, among them, as head, giving them and their legitimate successors magisterial authority to guide His Church until He comes again.

4. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man, was limited and restricted by His culture only in that which, apart from sin, limits man. But we also believe that He came in a time and to a people chosen by God. Thus, all that Jesus took up from His culture by His teaching or action is normative for every culture of every time and place. We reject the notion that Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, was limited or restricted in the fulfillment of the Mission entrusted to Him by the Father by the cultural context of His presence on Earth, His life as a Jew of the first third of the first century, or by any other factor.

5. Accordingly, we also reaffirm the constant teaching of the Catholic Church that ordained priesthood is not a "right" accorded to any member of the Church, but a state of life and a service to which, by Christ's will, only men, not women, may be called.

6. Following the teachings and example of Christ and the constant tradition of the Catholic Church, and mindful of its full significance, we consider it a privilege to call God 'Our Father,' a name which

*cont. next page*



reflects not only the relationship between human beings and their Creator, but which also provides a powerful symbolic model for men of the steadfast love, faithfulness, justice, mercy, wisdom and objectivity which are ideal components of human fatherhood vital to women, to families and to the social order. Contemporary efforts to impute a 'feminine' aspect to the Godhead, by retrojection of alien and anachronistic notions into the body of Sacred Scripture, by forcibly changing the language used to refer to God, by deliberate reversion to pagan notions of deity, or by any other means, we regard as dangerously misguided and perverse.

7. Therefore we reject all attempts to impose ideologically motivated innovations on the liturgy of the Church or changes in official lectionaries or sacramentaries or catechisms in the name of 'justice' to women. We deplore the deliberate manipulation of liturgical actions, signs and symbols and the politicization of both liturgy and language which effectively impede both receiving and transmitting the Catholic faith and harm the unity of the Church.

8. For these reasons, we oppose the systematic elimination from Scripture translations, liturgical texts, hymns, homilies and general usage of 'man' as a generic. The claim that the language is "sexist" and that such changes are required as a sensitive pastoral response to women collectively is false. We believe that the symbolic effect of mandating such changes in the language and practice of the Catholic Church is negative and confusing, effectively undermining the authority of the Church and her hierarchy.

9. We also oppose changing the constant practice of the Church in such liturgical matters as acolytes or 'altar servers' and homilists, and repudiate the increasingly frequent practice of women saying parts of the Eucharistic Prayer with the priest or in his place or performing other liturgical functions

reserved to ordained men.

10. We are grateful for the profound contribution of Pope John Paul II to our understanding of the meaning of human life and of the fundamental relationship of human beings with one another and with God through the many theological works he has given the Church during his pontificate, including his Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, which help to deepen our understanding of the centrality of the role of Christian women to the Church's evangelical mission. Constantly seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit, and in solidarity with the Pope, the Bishops in union with him, and with the universal Church, we pledge to respond to our Christian vocation with wisdom, with love and responsibility.

#### CONSORTIUM PERFECTAE CARITATIS

Administrative Council

Sr. Mary Elise, SND, President

#### FORUM OF MAJOR SUPERIORS of the INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS LIFE

Sr. Mary Assumpta, OP, President

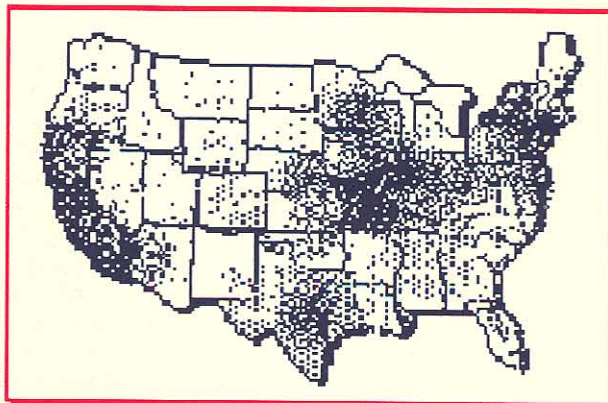
#### WOMEN FOR FAITH & FAMILY

Helen Hull Hitchcock, President

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## WFF IN AMERICA





# RECOURSE FOR INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS

*Johnny tells his parents that the religion teacher of his sixth-grade class showed a film graphically demonstrating different methods of artificial contraception.*

*Mary, a fourth grader, brings home a religion worksheet which asks detailed questions about her family, such as, 'has a parent or adult care-giver ever hit you?'*

*Susie complains to her mother that she was not among the fifth-grade girls picked to be "altar girls." Her eighth-grade brother says that if a bunch of girls are going to be servers he has better things to do.*

*Scott returns from a confirmation class retreat and tells his parents that Sister told them "There are many Christs. We are all Christ."*

*Maggie's high-school religion teacher has her class sit in a circle and conducts "creation-centered meditation". The girls are told that the Catholic Church is a sexist patriarchy which oppresses women.*

More women write to us about the problem of false teaching in Catholic schools than about any other concern. A frequent complaint is that even when parents try to talk to teachers and pastors their problems are ignored — or worse. Many parents hesitate to bring up these matters at all, fearing that their children will suffer discomfort or even reprisals.

What are parents to do in such cases? How can they assure that their child will receive the genuine Catholic teaching to which both parents and child are entitled? What recourse have they when just complaints fall on deaf ears, or when they are actually ridiculed and even insulted for their pains?

There is a "court of last resort" for concerned parents. It is called a "recourse action."

## What is "recourse action"?

A recourse action is a process by which the act (or acts) of one who exercises executive or administrative power (a bishop, for example) is appealed to a superior. Recourse actions are official legal procedures formally filed with the ecclesiastical courts to bring grievances of Catholics to the attention of the highest canonical authorities after ordinary methods to correct a problem have failed.

By 'ordinary methods' we mean, for example, 1) discussing the problem with the pastor of the parish, and 2) writing to the bishop clearly outlining the problem (giving concrete examples as necessary) and asking for his help. When these methods fail it is time to look into the possibility of filing a recourse action.

A recourse action can be thought of as something like a "restraining order" to prevent something undesirable from happening. The way it works is this:

1) The plaintiffs file a formal petition asking the bishop for a decree proscribing (forbidding) something — let's say it's use of "altar girls", or a defective catechetical program.

2) The bishop has three choices of response to the petition: 'yes', 'no', or he can ignore the request. If the answer is 'yes', the problem is resolved at this level.

3) If the bishop's response is negative ('no' or no response after a set period of time), the plaintiffs may then appeal. They present their petition to the bishop, who must send it to Rome. (He cannot legally refuse.)

4) the case is then decided by the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities at the Vatican.

## Where can I get help?

Even if we are aware that the Church's law states that all Catholics are entitled to authentic teaching from Catholic parishes and schools, correct and legitimate liturgies, &c., few of us would know how to secure these rights if they are being denied.

If you believe you have a problem which may require 'recourse action', we suggest you contact Charles Wilson of the St. Joseph Foundation. Mr. Wilson has assisted in the filing of several recourse actions which are currently being considered by Vatican authorities. One of these concerns the controversial "New Creation" catechetical series. For information about filing recourse actions, contact the St. Joseph Foundation, 4211 Gardendale, Suite A-100, San Antonio, TX 78229

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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The National Organization for Women (NOW), has called for a boycott of Domino's Pizza after the company's owner, Tom Monaghan, made a \$50,000 contribution to the Committee to End Tax-Funded Abortions. Monaghan, a Catholic, has also funded other Catholic causes.

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## In Memoriam

Memorial gifts have been received to honor the memory of  
**Stella Pencosky**  
**William P. Dorsey**  
*Requiescat in pace, et lux perpetua  
luceat eis.*



# POPE JOHN PAUL II ON *HUMANAE VITAE*

*Pope John Paul II addressed the Bishop-Presidents of the Episcopal Commissions for the Family at a meeting to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* in Rome on November 7, 1988. His address to the bishops was published in the newsletter of the Pontifical Council for the Family (December, 1988). Following are excerpts from that address.*

"In many places, reference to the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is connected almost automatically with the idea of the crisis which has struck and continues to strike conjugal morality. ...

"At the roots of the 'crisis', the Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* identified a corruption of the idea and practice of freedom which is 'conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God's plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation, often against others, for one's own selfish well being.' Still more radically there must be noted an **immanentist and secularist view of marriage** and of its values and demands: the refusal to recognize the divine source from which the spouses' love and fecundity derive exposes marriage and the family to disintegration even as a human experience.

"At the same time, the current situation also presents positive aspects among which emerges the rediscovery of the 'resources' which man and woman possess in order to live the full truth of conjugal love.

"**The first and fundamental resource** is the Sacrament of Marriage: that is to say, Jesus Christ himself who is present and working through his Spirit and makes Christian spouses sharers in his love for redeemed humanity. This 'sacrament' fully manifests and leads to supreme fulfilment that 'primordial sacrament of creation' for which, from the 'beginning', man and woman were created by God in his image and likeness and called to love and communion. In this way man and woman, while they fulfil their 'humanity' according to the marriage vocation, are placed at the service not only of their children, but also of the Church and society.

"The postconciliar period favored a progressive growth of awareness of the **ecclesial and social significance of marriage and the family**. There are the most common and, at the same time, the most fundamental areas in which the laity's mission in the Church is expressed. The 'Charter of the Rights of the Family', issued by the Holy See in 1983 at the request of the Synod of Bishops, is of particular importance for the knowledge of the social and political significance of the life of the couple and of the family. They are not merely recipients but real 'protagonists' of a 'policy' at the service of the common good of the family. ...

"It is extremely urgent to revive awareness of conjugal love as a gift. It is the gift which, through the

Sacrament of Marriage, the Holy Spirit...pours out in the hearts of Christian spouses. This same gift is the 'new law' of their existence, the root and strength of the moral life of the couple and of the family. And, in fact, their **ethos** consists in living all the dimensions of that gift:

- the **conjugal** dimension, which requires married persons to become increasingly one heart and one soul, thereby revealing in history the mystery of the very communion of God, one and three;

- the **family** dimension, which requires married people to be willing to 'cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day';

- the **ecclesial and social** dimension, through which Christian spouses and parents, by virtue of the Sacrament 'have their own gift in the People of God' and... 'as the first and living cell of society' (have) their responsibilities in the social and political sphere;

- the **religious** dimension, through which the couple and the family respond to God's gift and in faith, hope and charity make their whole life a 'spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'

"It is more urgent than ever that all — priests, religious, and laity — should have a renewed awareness of the **absolute necessity of family pastoral care as an integral part of the pastoral care of the Church, Mother and Teacher**.

"The essential requirement that **faith should become culture** must be realized first of all in the couple and in the family...

"For an effective and penetrating pastoral care of the family, it is necessary to aim at the **formation of pastoral workers**, also by encouraging vocations to the apostolate in this field...

"God wants every family to become, in Jesus Christ, a '**domestic Church**.' On this 'miniature Church' ... depends...the future of the Church and her evangelizing mission...

"This is the supreme end of the Church's pastoral action for which we bishops have the primary responsibility..."

[ *Ed. Note: Emphases in original. Copies of The Charter of the Rights of the Family available from WFF office.* ]





## VOICES

Women for Faith & Family  
P.O. Box 8326, St. Louis, MO  
63112

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## NOVENA FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE UNBORN

### PRAYERS

TO THE HOLY TRINITY, THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, ALL THE ANGELS AND SAINTS

**O HEAVENLY FATHER**, Creator and Giver of all life, Author of Justice, Source of love and mercy: Although it is deserving of Thine anger and punishment, look with mercy on our nation which has offended Thee by condoning the killing of millions of innocent children, Thy precious sons and daughters, who, like all of us, were created in Thine image and likeness, but whose only offense was their very existence. **AMEN.**

**O BLESSED LORD JESUS CHRIST, OUR REDEEMER**, whose inestimable gift of self-sacrificing love provided the means of Salvation for all mankind through the shedding of Thine innocent blood: grant that all may come to know Thee, serve Thee and love Thee, and thus may know the meaning of true freedom and true liberty which never destroys, but always serves and protects life. **AMEN.**

**O HOLY SPIRIT**, source of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety and holy fear: inspire us with these gifts. Fill the hearts of the leaders of this nation, especially those who have the temporal power and the grave responsibility to make and interpret and execute laws, with the desire to do God's Will, to restore justice and to establish laws which govern the people of this land in conformity with the Divine Law — laws which will preserve, protect and defend the lives of all sons and daughters of God, from their earliest beginnings until death. **AMEN.**

**O MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS**, entrusted to be the mother of God's only-begotten Son, Our Savior, through thine obedient consent to God's Will, and who thus became for all people and all time the model of faith and of the self-giving love and devotion of Motherhood: take into thy motherly arms all the babies who are victims of abortion that they may receive eternally the comfort of a mother's love. May thine example and thine intercession open the hearts of all who reject God and His holy laws, comfort all those who suffer remorse because of abortion, and restore to hope in Christ those mothers and fathers who grieve and repent the killing of their children. **AMEN.**

**ALL YE ANGELS AND SAINTS**, may thy guidance and example show fallen humanity the way to perfect joy and freedom and peace found only in unity with God in obedience to His Will through Salvation in Christ Jesus; and may thy constant prayers be joined by those of all the little children — the "slaughtered innocents" — as a "cloud of witnesses" interceding for sinful man. **AMEN.**

#### NOVENA: DAY 1

Psalm 139  
Gloria Patri  
Above Prayers  
Rosary: Sorrowful Mysteries  
Magnificat: Luke 1:46-55

#### NOVENA: DAYS 2-9

Our Father...  
Above Prayers  
Gloria Patri  
Three 'Hail Marys'  
Gloria Patri