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Papal Wish More Contacts With Orthodox

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI has told Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, supreme spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodoxy, that he prays that "during this New Year, the relations so happily begun at our first meeting may develop and be intensified."

The pontiff told Patriarch Athenagoras that he remembered "the pure joy" experienced in their historic meeting last year in the Holy Land.

Pope Paul's cable to the Orthodox leader in Istanbul was one of five he sent to distinguished Church and government leaders on the anniversary of his unprecedented tour of the Holy Places.

He also sent cordial messages of greeting to Greek Orthodox Patriarch Beneditos and Armenian Orthodox Patriarch Derderian, both of Jerusalem; King Hussein of Jordan; and President Zalman Shazar of Israel. The pontiff had conferred with each on his pilgrimage.

In his cable to Patriarch Athenagoras, Pope Paul referred to a greeting he had received from the Orthodox leader. "Profoundly moved by Your Holiness' message of such delicate feeling that it has renewed in our soul the memory of the pure joy experienced at our meeting last year in the places sanctified by the Lord."

'Difficult Team' Tests Wisdom, Skill of Pope

Minneapolis (RNS) — Those who expressed disappointment with Pope Paul's action in the closing days of Vatican II's third session should wait four or five years before they start marking the Pope's "report card," a Protestant delegate, observer said here.

Dr. Warren A. Quansbeck, Lutheran World Federation observer at the Council, noted that the Pope, as "chief pastor" of the Roman Catholic Church has a responsibility to avoid schism.

Pope Paul, he told some 200 members of the Minneapolis Ministerial Association, is "driving a difficult team."

"He has to hold back the progressive bishops and prod the conservative ones," he commented.

Dr. Quansbeck, professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary, praised Pope Paul as an "honest, conscientious and liberal man" who is following in the footsteps of Pope John.

Appeal for Needy Set In March

Washington (RNS) — American Catholics are being asked to contribute to the 19th annual Bishops' Relief Fund Appeal—to aid the world's needy regardless of race or creed—during March 21-28, midway in the 40-day Lenten period.

The dates were announced here by Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle of Washington, chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Conference's Administrative Board.

Funds collected are used to support the worldwide assistance work of Catholic Relief Services—NCWC, overseas aid agency of "U.S. Catholics. In 1964 the Bishops' Fund made it possible for CRS to maintain an annual program of nearly \$160 million—aiding about 40,000,000 people in 73 nations.

An annual feature of the appeal is a Lenten campaign of prayer and almsgiving among Catholic parochial school children, to whom the Pope usually makes a special address. Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 3, the children will mark Lent by making personal contributions to help the poor.

In his announcement, Archbishop O'Boyle noted that Pope Paul VI "has said again and again that we must intensify our efforts in the war against hunger, poverty and disease if we are to hope for world peace." He also observed that the problem of aiding the world's sufferers was discussed at the Vatican Council's third session in connection with the schema on the Church in the Modern World.

"I am confident," the archbishop added, "that the attention that has been focused on this whole question will encourage our people to support the Bishops' Fund even more generously than they have in the past."

Canadian Law Aids Catholics

Regina, Saskatchewan (NC) — Catholics in Saskatchewan can earmark their tax payments for secondary education exclusively for Catholic secondary schools under a new law that went into effect with the start of the new year.

Up to now, Catholics who chose to allocate their tax money for Catholic schools were also required to pay for the support of public secondary schools. The amendment to the Secondary School Act of 1907 was enacted last year by the province legislature.

Saskatchewan Catholics have long had the right to allocate their tax payments for elementary education to Catholic schools alone without also having to pay for public elementary schools.

Observers said the change in the secondary school legislation makes Saskatchewan second only to Quebec among Canadian provinces in granting tax benefits to Catholics and their elementary and secondary schools.

Vocations Gain Over 200

Philadelphia (NC) — The Philadelphia archdiocese in 1964 had an increase of 37 per cent in the number of religious vocations over the previous year.

Father Edward J. Thompson, archdiocesan director of vocations, said 803 from the archdiocese entered religious institutions in 1964 to prepare for the priesthood, brotherhood or sisterhood. This was 217—115 boys and 102 more girls—above the 1963 record.

Congo Survivors Greet Pope

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI had a special greeting at a general audience for a group of nuns who escaped the massacre of missionaries at Wamba in the Congo. The Italian nuns are members of the Missionary Sisters of Verona. Other missionaries, including priests and Sisters, were in the general audience of some 1,000 persons in the Vatican's Hall of Benedictions. The Pope has often paid tribute to the martyrdom of missionaries in the Congo and has made many pleas for peace in the new African nation.

Bleak Outlook For Congo Church

London (NC) — The head of the Mill Hill missionaries said on returning home from the Congo that even if rebel activities did not reveal the threat of communism, the future of the Church there would appear "somber."

Father Gerald Mahon spent 19 days in the Congo. The main point of his trip was to see whether it is safe to return to their posts some of the 40 Mill Hill priests and Brothers who had been evacuated from rebel territory in the northeast last September.

THE PRIEST disclosed in an interview with the weekly Catholic Herald that he flew from Leopoldville to Basankusu—a diocese bordering the beleaguered Stanleyville province—to confer with the bishop, a Dutch Mill Hill missionary, who has 20 mission stations. He said that after talking with Bishop Guillaume van Kester, it was decided to leave six of the 20 mission stations manned by skeleton staffs despite the danger.

He said the decision was made—even though three of his society's missionaries were missing in rebel-held territory—because the presence of priests has proved a stabilizing influence on the local people. He said that for those who remained, there was a motorboat ready to take them down a tributary of the Congo River in case of rebel attack.

After citing the evidence of communist influence—especially that of Red China—among the Congolese rebels, Father Mahon said:

"If the communists do succeed in capturing the Congo, they will have gained the richest African nation other than South Africa. . . . More, the Congo is the very heart of Africa, and from such a position the communists would be able to influence every African nation."

Public Rites For Deacons

Boston (NC) — For the first time in the history of the Boston archdiocese, seminarians will be ordained to the diaconate in a public ceremony, scheduled for March 17 at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. Ordinarily the ceremony is held at the seminary chapel.



Saigon (RNS) — A funeral is held for two villagers killed by Communist troops in the predominantly Roman Catholic village of Binh Nghia, about 40 miles east of Saigon in South Vietnam. A Crucifix is held high as men cover a grave. The villagers died in the fighting between government soldiers and the Viet Cong.

LBJ Population Fear Disputed

Washington (NC) — A Catholic spokesman on family life matters took issue here with President Johnson's remark on population growth and the publicity it has received. Msgr. John C. Knott, director of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference also said bluntly that despite popular opinion, the Catholic Church's teaching that contraception is "a serious moral evil" has not changed.

He recalled the 1959 statement of the U.S. Catholic bishops which said that Catholics will not support any public assistance to promote artificial birth prevention. "That is also still in effect," he said.

The director of the family life unit at the U.S. Bishops' national secretariat noted that Mr. Johnson pledged in his State of the Union address: "I will seek new ways to use our knowledge to help deal with the explosion in world population and the growing scarcity in world resources."

Msgr. Knott said this "one small sentence" has gotten "a knowledge."

Responsibility Not Conformity Urged for Nuns

Fort Wayne (NC) — Moral responsibility rather than unquestioning conformity is the trademark of "the nun in the modern world," a Sister-college president told other nuns here.

Yesterday's Sister, according to Sister Mary Ann Ida, president of Mundelein College in Chicago, "the one that taught you and me in first grade, was brought up in the kind of mentality that canonized what had been. It made sacred the externals of dress and behavior."

She told 400 Sisters from schools and other institutions of the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese at two separate sessions that "in the past we were so taken with following regulations that we did not look for the inner commitment that made us do what we did."

But Sisters today, the educator insisted, "are developing a new spirituality, a new approach to their commitments."

There is nothing wrong in itself with being "old-fashioned," she said, adding: "If it would draw more people to Christ we'd wear hoop skirts."

'Agonized' Era Faith Eroded, Prelate Writes

Los Angeles (NC) — Cardinal James McIntyre in a pastoral letter called for strengthening basic belief in the divinity of Christ to offset increasing tendencies to ignore God's teachings and laws.

"This trend in our society is due to a slow erosion of the basic recognition of the divinity of Christ, upon whose authority these truths make imperative command of our minds and wills," the cardinal said.

"That erosion is witnessed by the broad and loose descriptions given to Christ and His position in the affairs of men," said the 1,500-word pastoral which was read Jan. 10 in all churches of the Los Angeles archdiocese.

"Some speak of Him as though He were simply an extraordinary man, even a very holy man. Others regard Him as though He were merely a great leader and moral teacher, even a great prophet and human

representative of God," the cardinal wrote.

To speak of Christ thus, the cardinal said, is not to acknowledge His divinity nor to accord to Him the respect and obedience which divine authority demands.

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