



FLORENCE CATHEDRAL

Part of Florence's Rare Architecture

Florence, Italy—One of the world's most treasured cities is Florence, steeped in the history of Europe and the repository of some of its greatest treasures. Although the city was hit by a disastrous flood, special efforts are being made to save its rare art and architecture such as the famous Cathedral shown here.

Also known as Il Duomo and after 1412, Santa Maria del Fiore (for the lily which figures in the arms of Florence), the Cathedral was founded in 1285 and consecrated in 1436. At the time of its erection the Cathedral of Florence was the largest in Italy.

Shown partially at right is the famous 276-foot Campanile built by Giotto and adorned with exquisite bas-reliefs.

Christ's Height Center of Dispute

Vatican City — (RNS) — A Vatican librarian has become involved in a legal battle over this issue: Was Christ a tall man or relatively short?

Msgr. Giulio Ricci, archivist of the Congregation of Bishops, recently published a book "Stature of the Man of the Shroud" in which he claimed that Christ was only 182 centimeters, about 5 feet 4.

However, a Prof. Lorenzo Ferri, on the basis of his own research insists that Christ was 6 feet 1.

Moreover, he is seeking a legal injunction against further publication of Msgr. Ricci's book. He claims the monsignor's theme undermines his scientific standing in Italy.

In a Rome court, Professor Ferri insisted that if Msgr. Ricci does not withdraw his views on Christ's stature, he will start legal proceedings to force him to do so. He has challenged the librarian to a public debate.

According to Msgr. Ricci, the height of 5 feet 4 he estimated for Jesus would have been at the upper end of average stature for people living at the time of Christ. He said the average height then ranged from 4 feet 11 to 5 feet 4. Thus, he holds, Jesus was a tall man of His time on earth.

Priests, Students Take Legal Action on Draft

San Francisco — (NC) — A group of priests and students have taken legal action to secure for Catholics the right to follow conscience and refuse to serve in any war they deem unjust.

A suit filed in federal court here by attorney Richard Harrington attacks the constitutionality of section 6 (j) of the draft law, which allows followers of certain religious sects that oppose war "in any form" to be exempt from military service.

"I want those three words—'in any form'—deleted from the law," Harrington stated. "They allow a Quaker to go free while they turn a Catholic into a felon."

Members of the Society of Friends (Quakers), Mennonites, and The Brethren qualify for draft exemption under this clause.

Harrington said Catholic doctrine calls upon a person to search his conscience and abide by it. This would mean, he said, that a Catholic who feels the war is just should serve in it, and a Catholic who feels it is unjust should refuse to serve.

He claimed that guidelines for forming a conscience about a particular armed conflict are set forth explicitly in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World adopted in 1965 by the Second Vatican Council. Sections 79 and 80 list actions "in conflict with universal natural law" such as genocide, wars of aggression, inhumane treatment of prisoners of war, and nuclear warfare.

"Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities, or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man, himself," according to Section 80.

The suit asks that draft boards be stopped from refusing to exempt Catholics who claim to be conscientious objectors. It also asks for an injunction to prevent the prosecution of young men declared delinquent by the draft boards.

Most of the priests bringing suit said they have counseled Catholics to refuse to register for the draft or to serve in the military "if they in conscience honestly believe, rightly or wrongly, that participation in the present war does not conform to the requirements of Catholic belief."

For this, they say, they are liable to prosecution.

Medicine

Doctor Warns of 'Abortion Mentality'

Louvain, Belgium — (NC) — Emotional public opinion on the highly complicated problem of abortion is reducing the physician to a socio-legal instrument of destruction, a New York doctor told the 10th International Colloquium on Sexology here.

The speaker, Dr. Bernard J. Pisani, head of the obstetrics and gynecology department of St. Vincent's Hospital, New York, also claimed that public opinion is trying to tell the physician what to do rather than allowing him to use his own best judgment.

"Unwanted pregnancy is now considered a disease and abortion is considered therapeutic, regardless of medical indications or social implications," he continued.

Unwanted pregnancy thrives in the environment of an "abortion mentality," Dr. Pisani said, because, gradually, carelessness develops in methods of contraception, "mistakes" multiply, and permissiveness prevails because now the operation of legal "therapeutic" abortion can be obtained for the asking.

He also warned against the danger of an ever-expanding base of justification for "legal abortion" and the growth of a movement to enact more legislation in the realm of life and death.

A paper by Dr. Frank J. Ayd Jr., a Catholic psychiatrist of Baltimore, Md., told the meeting that arguments supporting abortion "are conditioned by appeals to emotions which prevent them from recognizing the potential consequences of liberal abortion laws."

"Today they ask for liberal abortion laws," it warned. "Tomorrow, they will champion sterilization and euthanasia. They will not hesitate to advocate compulsory birth control and even compulsory euthanasia, because to them the individual is less important than the state. And if the state is threatened by sheer number of people and insufficient food, then individuals must be sacrificed."

Hospitality... Chinese Style

Hong Kong — (RNS) — A 10-man team of Italians who were on an unofficial international peace mission reported here they have been expelled from Communist China for refusing to sign a statement denouncing Pope Paul VI as "a criminal in the service of Western imperialist powers."

The group had left Hong Kong for Canton on May 11 after having visited 11 countries to present greetings from the recent Milan Trade Fair and expressions of goodwill from Pope Paul.

According to Uberto Corti, leader of the group, their expulsion came after they had been held by the Canton police for 24 hours and subjected to rigorous interrogation.

"They thought," he said, "that we were going to bring a message from Pope Paul. We could not deny that our mission had left Vatican City with the blessing of the Pope and his expressions of fraternity and peace toward countries having relations with the Holy See. We were asked to sign a declaration that the Pope was at the service of Western capitalistic powers. We refused."

The Italians left Hong Kong for Bangkok, Thailand. Among those on the team were Alfredo Pieroni, a Milan newsman, who said the Italians had "lived in fear the whole night" in Canton, and Maner Luaidi a Milanese art director, who said he had told the Canton police he would "stay in China for life before signing a statement denouncing the Pope."

State K. of C. Plans Annual Meeting

More than 1,800 grand knights and delegates from the 378 K. of C. councils in New York State, will assemble at the Concord Hotel at Lake Kiamasha for the 73rd annual convention of the State Council of the Knights of Columbus on May 29-31.

His Excellency, the Most Rev. Thomas A. Donnellan, Bishop of Ogdensburg, will be celebrant of the Concelebrated Pontifical Mass, which will officially open the convention. Bishop Donnellan is the State Father Prior of Youth for the Knights of Columbus.

The social convention highlight will be the Memorial Day banquet with the Most Rev. Terence Cooke, Archbishop of New York as guest of honor. Dr. John W. McDevitt, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus, will be the principal speaker.

William Van Tassel of Beacon, general chairman, has stated that this is the largest convention in the history of the State Knights.

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