



## English Urge Tolerance on Birth Issue

By John A. Greaves  
(NC News Service)

London — English and Welsh bishops defended Pope Paul VI's ruling on birth control in a statement Sept. 24, but took a tolerant line toward couples using artificial contraception in individual hard cases, and stressed the primacy of an informed conscience.

The joint statement on the Pope's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, followed a meeting of the bishops under the chairmanship of John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster.

In a special word to parents, the bishops stated:

"The Pope does not attempt to tell parents how many children they ought to have. This decision is one to be taken by the parents alone in the light of all the moral considerations laid down in the encyclical. One of these considerations is that each exercise of the marriage act must remain in itself open to the transmission of life, although, as the Pope points out, in fact, not every conjugal act is followed by a new life.

"Nevertheless it is against the plan of God to take positive steps to destroy the possibility of the transmission of life."

The statement appealed to opponents of the papal ruling not to close their minds. It stated:

"In view of the controversy which the encyclical has aroused, the bishops of England and Wales call upon all Catholics to conduct their discussions in a responsible and temperate manner and in a mutually charitable spirit.

"Discussion has so far centered mainly on the question of contraception. The impression is given that the Pope set out merely to condemn artificial methods of birth control, which he could have done in a single sentence.

"The encyclical speaks at length of the dignity of marriage, the beauty of married love and the obligation of responsible parenthood.

"Pope Paul wrote his encyclical only after years of study and prayer. In the heat of controversy some writers appear to have forgotten that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ. It is for him to issue encyclical letters whenever he thinks it his duty to do so....

"No member of the commission thought the questions proposed to it could be resolved by a majority vote. Its task was to sift the evidence and to present the Pope with its findings. It was always understood that the decision must be made by him alone as Christ's vicar....

"From the beginning the Pope regarded this decision as one which he personally must make.... The encyclical has evoked serious discussion on the whole exercise of the magisterium (the Church's teaching authority). It is being argued that in a matter so intimately affecting the lives of millions, the burden of responsibility should not rest upon one man even though he is the Vicar of Christ.

"At the council it was generally recognized that a question of such delicacy as contraception could not properly be debated by that vast assembly. Collegiality must be the subject of further study, but it cannot

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Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey kneels during a Roman Catholic Mass telecast from a studio in Columbus, Ohio, where, earlier, the Democratic presidential candidate had "taped" an address. The Mass, celebrated by Father Arnold Favret of Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church, is aired weekly.

## Bishops Implore U.S. to Act On Biafra 'In Name of God'

Washington — (NC) — The administrative committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued a statement imploring, "in the name of God and of all His human family," the United States government "to take the leadership" in providing massive relief necessary to save the lives of "countless thousands" in Nigeria-Biafra.

The bishops said it is "one of the appalling realities" of the present crisis that peoples have been unable to act through their respective governments to aid the people of a nation in the dread grip of war. They noted that in disasters such as earthquakes and floods "nations move rapidly to succor the needs of the afflicted," but that "in the Nigerian-Biafran disaster men, women and children wait in vain for help."

"In this frightful human conflict we must honestly face this profound reality: lives of men, women and children are supremely more valuable than political considerations," the bishops asserted in their statement issued following a meeting here.

"Therefore, in the name of God and of all His human family, we implore our government to take the leadership in making possible the massive relief effort which is absolutely necessary to save the lives of countless thousands of persons in Nigeria-Biafra.

Meanwhile, U.S. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Caritas Internationalis, the international Catholic charities organization, have announced a \$500,000 joint emergency program for Biafra.

The money is to be used for additional food, medical supplies and

clothing and also for about 20 small trucks which the groups said are urgently needed to deliver goods in some areas recently captured by Nigerian federal troops. The announcement of the program was made here by Auxiliary Bishop Edward E. Swanson of New York, executive director of CRS.

"Hundreds of thousands may die before the end of the year," Bishop Swanson said. "They need at least a thousand tons of relief assistance a day to prevent widespread starvation."

"We on our part pledge our continued efforts to minister to these suffering people."

The bishops said they are compelled to speak out "in the face of the cruel fate which awaits thousands and thousands of persons in that war-torn country."

"We cannot stand by in silence," they asserted, "faced as we are with the knowledge, on the one hand, that tens of thousands of human beings are dying of starvation and countless others face the same prospect of disease and starvation, while on the other hand ample supplies are available to alleviate their suffering."

The bishops said they "are forced to express our profound horror at the deplorable impasse to which negotiations about humanitarian relief have come."

They asserted that "foodstuffs, as well as medicines, are available in vast quantities" and that "personnel and the means of distributing these materials are also available."

They thanked the American people for the "magnificent generosity" with

which they have volunteered money and supplies.

## NCC Makes Appeal To the President

Houston, Tex. — (RNS) — The General Board of the National Council of Churches appealed here to President Johnson for increased efforts to save the people of Biafra.

Starvation in Biafra is a "major human tragedy" and can be expected to reach "overwhelming proportions" by October, the board said in a resolution adopted at its Fall business sessions.

"Large scale relief of this human suffering must not be subordinated to the tragic conflicts of battle," it declared.

Thanking the Organization of African Unity and its president — Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia — for their efforts at securing agreements to permit the distribution of relief supplies, the board said African leadership in the rescue operations is "essential."

"We note with appreciation the offer of President Johnson, expressed to Emperor Haile Selassie, to provide large scale relief supplies," the resolution said.

"We urge the President, using every effective influence, to continue his efforts toward the objective of immediate delivery of desperately needed relief supplies to the children and adults who are starving."

The board pledged "generous" financial support from the churches and the agencies.

## Padre Pio, Stigmata Priest, Dies

San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy — Padre Pio, a Capuchin monk whose body and limbs bore the stigmata of the Crucifixion of Jesus, died Sept. 23 of bronchial complications in his cell at the Monastery of St. Mary of the Graces. He was 81.

Known throughout the world, Padre Pio, who name had been Francesco Forgione, was born of humble peasant parents in Pietralcina, Southern Italy, on May 25, 1887. He donned the Capuchin habit in 1903.

His death came only three days after he celebrated the 50th anniversary of the appearance of the stigmata that brought him world renown and such generous donations that he was able to construct a seven-story hospital with a heliport, to care for many of the thousands of the sick who visited him for his blessing and words of comfort.

For many years Padre Pio had been a subject of controversy within the Church.

After childhood, during which he showed religious leanings, Padre Pio joined the Capuchins and took his final vows in 1907.

In 1916, he was sent to the monastery at San Giovanni Rotondo, where, except for a short time in the Army during World War I, he remained for the rest of his religious career.

The stigmata — described as "visible and permanent" — appeared on Sept. 20, 1918, while he was celebrating Mass.

Within a short time, he became known throughout the world, but the Vatican's Holy Office (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the



PADRE PIO

Faith) in decrees of 1926 and 1931 "did not attest to the supernaturalness of the events attributed to Padre Pio and exhorted the faithful to refrain from visiting him."

But in 1933 the Holy Office revoked its decrees and Padre Pio was able to resume his church duties including celebrating Mass and hearing confessions.

Meanwhile, as his fame grew, donations poured into the monastery and he began plans for the construction of the hospital. He also organized prayer groups.

In July, 1961, a Vatican prelate conducted an investigation into the management of the hospital and Padre Pio's prayer groups.

The followers of the Padre were accused of fanaticism; and the administration of the hospital was termed "disorderly and incapable."

In the last few years, however, these sanctions were quietly lifted. Pope Paul, last year, in commemoration of Padre Pio's 60th anniversary of profession of faith, sent a letter permitting him to give the apostolic blessing. Last week, the Pope sent a special blessing to Padre Pio on the 50th anniversary of the appearance of the stigmata.

Padre Pio was described in the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* as "a man of humility, prayer and penitence." The newspaper said that "In time, the Church will pronounce upon his so often talked about special supernatural gifts."

The newspaper also praised the hospital, saying it was "very modern, well-equipped and staffed both sanitarily and spiritually." It noted that the Vatican had given Padre Pio permission to celebrate Mass sitting down, in deference to his age and failing health.

## Washington Hassle Brings Suspension Of Priests' Duties

From Courier-Journal News Services

Washington — A walkout by some and a standing ovation by others greeted Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington last Sunday as he read a statement decrying his diocesan priests who oppose his strict interpretation of the papal birth control encyclical.

By midweek, 13 of the 44 dissenting priests of the Washington area had been forbidden to hear confessions and 6 of them had been further restricted in their ministry, according to the Association of Washington Priests. The action came after 43 of the dissenters had been interviewed by the cardinal. The 44th, Father T. Joseph O'Donoghue, had previously been relieved of his duties.

The cardinal spoke in the pulpit of St. Matthew's Cathedral at three Masses to read a pastoral letter about those who have disagreed with the papal encyclical.

Despite his strong condemnation of the "new morality," Cardinal O'Boyle stressed in his letter to the people that he did not "wish to pass judgment on the motives of any man."

"In many cases," he stated, "I know the ability, the priestly zeal, and the personal goodness of the priests who are in disagreement with the teaching of the Holy Father. I know how much we stand to lose if they insist upon leaving us."

"However," he said, "I am given no authority to teach, to preach, to administer the Sacrament of Confession except in accordance with teaching of the Church. Priests receive from me their authorization to engage in the priestly ministry in this diocese.

## Delays Snag Work on New Canons

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — Approval of translations into English of the new prefaces and canons for the Roman Catholic Mass has encountered a number of delays and probably will not be available before December or January.

Father Gerald J. Sigler, executive secretary of the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, said that "vacations, delays in the mail including a postal strike in Canada, and other factors" have hindered the work.

The prefaces and canons for the Mass had been issued from Rome in their Latin text on May 23. Translations were mailed to the various bishops in English-speaking nations, on July 14. Nearly 700 bishops received this text which he described as a "semi-final translation with explanatory notes."

Father Sigler said that the Bishops' suggestions would be reviewed by the committee at its next meeting, scheduled for Rome, Oct. 12 and 13.

It is presumed that a final text will result from these discussions and then each of the national conferences of bishops will have to meet and approve the translations. Printing and distribution will follow.

Some countries might have the new texts by early December, he said, "but the first of next year or later seems a more likely date for the majority."

## Vatican Document Due on Communism?

Rome — (RNS) — The Vatican will issue a document Oct. 1 clearly outlining the attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church on Marxism, Communism and atheism, according to unofficial sources here.

The document, reportedly prepared by Franz Cardinal Koenig, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers, is expected to reaffirm the Church's desire for dialogue but also to stress that the Church cannot compromise with atheism and that Catholics may not join atheist organizations.



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