

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Msgr. O'Meara Wins Mission Award

New York — (RNS) — Msgr. Edward T. O'Meara, national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, received the 1968 Xavier Award in recognition of his "outstanding zeal and dedication to the foreign missions."

The occasion was the 26th annual benefit dinner sponsored by the Jesuit Seminary and Mission Bureau. More than 1,200 guests heard the principal speaker, Archbishop Terence J. Cooke of New York, stress that "the spiritual health of the Church at home is correlated with the missionary thrust abroad."

The Xavier Award — named in honor of St. Francis Xavier, patron of the missions — was presented by Father John G. Furniss, S.J., director of the Jesuit Mission Bureau. Hailing Msgr. O'Meara's work, he noted that the Society for the Propagation of the Faith "supported more than 850 needy impoverished bishops and dioceses throughout the world."

Msgr. O'Meara is a native of St. Louis. He has been associated with the society for many years and was named his present post in January 1967 after his predecessor, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, was appointed to the Rochester, N.Y. diocese. He holds a doctorate in sacred theology from the Angelicum University in Rome.

Ecumenism Group At Work

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — A new interreligious committee formed to seek mutual understanding and common action has begun its work.

Members are Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Bishop Joseph L. Bernardin, general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops; and Rabbi Henry Siegman, executive vice-president of the Synagogue Council of America.

The formation of the committee has been explained as an effort to seek "areas of common concern" and to continue "the movement in ecumenism which has marked earlier meetings of these leaders."

Eastern-Rite Laymen Seek Voice

Royal Oak, Mich. — (RNS) — Catholic laymen of the Eastern Rites have urged their hierarchy to establish an advisory council similar to the one being organized by the United States Catholic Conference.

The council would serve as an adjunct to the proposed Conference of Catholic Bishops of Eastern Rites that the laymen suggested recently.

It would "not only be a logical extension of our Eastern traditions and mentality but also will implement the decrees of Vatican Council II," a letter to the bishops said.

Private School Group Takes Heart

Lansing — (RNS) — The interreligious Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools has pledged its full cooperation with President-elect Richard M. Nixon's proposed task force on non-public schools.

Dr. John Choitz, president of Michigan Lutheran College and of the Association, said he believed the Task Force would find that something must be done to help the schools survive financial difficulties.

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Symbol of Christ

Students at St. Frances Cabrini Roman Catholic school in Alexandria, La., place symbols on a Jesse tree on the window of their classroom. The tree, named for King David's father, Jesse, symbolizes the coming of Christ as foretold through his ancestors and by the prophets. According to the school's principal, Sister M. Philathea, the tree is combined with the open Bible on a stand and the advent wreath to remind all who come to the school that Christ, the Messiah, is to come. (RNS)

Sen. McCarthy Backs Dissenting Priests

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — Sen. Eugene McCarthy, whose bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination was regarded as the voice for U.S. dissent on Vietnam, spoke here in behalf of 40 Washington priests disciplined for their public dissent from Pope Paul's encyclical forbidding artificial contraception.

The senator, a Catholic who once studied briefly for the priesthood, addressed a "Unity Day" rally called to support the priests in their controversy with Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington.

Sen. McCarthy's views favoring the priests had come earlier—he had invited one of the disciplined priests to live in his Washington home.

He described the rally as a "show of concern for their freedom of conscience," referring to the priests who have been suspended, transferred, or dismissed from their posts because of their stand on birth control.

The priest in Washington, he said, is not a demand for priests to be able to say whatever they please or a defense of their human rights. Rather, it is a demand, he said, that the priests be allowed to function as "double agents" serving God and man.

"It is the priestly role," he continued, "to mediate between man and God and God and man. And when the priest performs this role we must be ready to sustain him."

Hearing Ordered On Christmas Stamp

Washington — (RNS) — The U.S. Court of Appeals has ordered a new hearing on a suit which last year attempted to halt the sale of Christmas postage stamps having religious motifs.

Last year the U.S. District Court in Washington dismissed the suit, claiming the initiator, Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU), had no standing before the court.

On June 10 however, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Flast vs. Board of Education*, ruled that New Yorkers had the right to sue in a case involving public spending and First Amendment guarantees of religious freedom. The New York case contested the state spending of funds which aided parochial schools through the loan of textbooks.

Americans United is contesting Post Office issue of a stamp showing part of a painting by the Flemish artist Hans Memling. The portrait used showed Mary enthroned as Queen of Heaven, holding the infant Jesus on her lap.

The church-state organization contended that the U.S. government has no right to use religious symbols on such things as stamps, coins, and government buildings.

Gaston Codell, speaking for Americans United, said that not only is the stamp a depiction of a Christian religious

motif, it also is Catholic insofar as only Catholics believe in Mary as Queen of Heaven.

In the two years since the stamp was first issued 4 billion copies have been sold. The Post Office Department is issuing another stamp with a religious motif this year. It is a detail, showing the Archangel Gabriel, from Jan Van Eyck's painting of The Annunciation which hangs in the National Gallery of Art.

Planned Parenthood Backs Abortion, Sterilization Plans

New York — (RNS) — Planned Parenthood-World Federation—for the first time in its 52-year history — has recognized abortion and sterilization as "proper medical backup techniques to omitted or failed contraception."

The decisions for either procedure, the national birth control agency declared, should rest with the woman and her physician, with full knowledge of all factors involved.

Planned Parenthood also called for abolition of existing criminal laws covering abortion and sterilization and placing them under codes governing medical practice.

Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, president, was pleased with the stand, but cautioned that neither procedure should take the place of effective contraception.

Planned Parenthood believes, he said, that abortion and sterilization "are medically and socially desirable only in unusual circumstances, never for routine birth control."

The national stance must be approved by the 158 affiliates throughout the country to become local policy.

Private Colleges Seen Expiring Without Aid

Philadelphia — (RNS) — "Our educational system will have changed radically for the worse by 1970 unless there is substantial aid to private colleges," the president of St. Louis University said here.

In an address at St. Joseph's College, Father Paul C. Reinert, S.J., warned that there are "unmistakable signs that our public-private pluralistic system is running into serious problems."

Tax-supported colleges "are experiencing real difficulties," he admitted, because of a lack of support from private citizens, but private education faces "a situation which could end in extinction for some and mediocre half-life for others."

The American public, "speaking and acting through their governmental representatives," Father Reinert said, must "provide some form of assistance at both the state and federal level" if private colleges are to survive.

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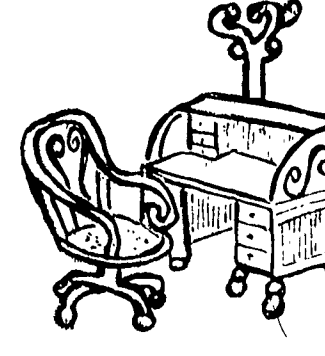
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In a statemen pathy with geograph to play a major r But they pointed c led to war, starva Biafra and Katanga

Stand Again
Ottawa, Ont. — Carter of Sault Ste Canadian Catholic (that several Memb Catholic bishops of this country's a

He said he had as their spiritual a the changes, but t to their conscienc

Bishop Carter fighting proposed dealing with divorc trol information. T ings on such matt

Freedom Hai
Warsaw — (RNS) were the themes of Roman Catholic hi 50th anniversary of War I. For approxi fore the war, Pola Russia, Austria an

"Nations whic ery will not be ab the benefits of fr oppression has "im a respect for every

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