

Promote Dialogue with Jews, U. S. Catholics Told

New York—(NC)—A warning to American Catholics not to let "unconcern and indifference" nullify the Church's efforts to eliminate the difficulties that have separated Christians and Jews has been issued by the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations.

"The initiative in promoting Catholic-Jewish encounters in general still derives largely from the Jewish community," the secretariat declared in commemorating the third anniversary of the Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews.

The secretariat urged Catholics to assume the initiative,

"especially in this country in which the world's largest Jewish community lives."

In its statement the secretariat added:

"We must resolve that the grave and multiple troubles in the Church and the world do not distract our attention from the high priority that should be given to Catholic-Jewish relations.

"One hopes that such Catholic initiatives will be accepted by all segments of the Jewish community as motivated exclusively by fraternal dispositions. Suspicious of insincerity and proselytism stultify fruitful conversations. Cooperation demands reci-

procity and promotes mutual respect."

The secretariat's statement conceded that Jewish-Catholic relations have never been better in history. Despite the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967, the dialogue is "still vital and gives promise of further growth and intensification."

The following comments on certain developments in the current scene were made by the secretariat:

1—"We look upon Jewish aid given to Biafra as a milestone in the development of Jewish-Christian cooperation . . . American Jews have proven — to use a Biblical

term — their 'righteousness' and have once more made us their debtors."

2—"With sorrow we note the continuing violence . . . in the Middle East . . . The fundamental issue is that of Israel's right to exist and develop in peace. If this basic issue is settled, the solution of all other important issues, including that of refugees, will be greatly facilitated."

3 — Christian scholars are

urged to study the Scriptures for possible occasion of anti-Semitism and the clergy, "now that we have alternative Scriptural readings," were urged to select readings "with an awareness of Jewish sensibilities."

4 — Theologians were advised to expand their studies, in the light of the Vatican Council, to include "the enduring reality of Judaism and its legitimate role in God's plan for salvation."

5—"Alarmed by the ever-widening estrangement between black and white people in the United States, we are increasingly apprehensive that this alienation has recently emerged in the form of antagonism against the Jews . . . Unless Americans acknowledge the rights and dignity of every group and individual, black or white, Christian or Jew, the rights and dignity of no one are safe."

Religions And Man To Be Studied

Honolulu — (RNS) — An Institute of Religion and Social Change will be established here in early 1970. It will seek to determine how the world's religions help or hinder man in an age of rapid social and technological change.

The institute will be patterned on the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Advanced Religious Studies. Initially, 24 to 36 students will be enrolled.

Plans for the institute staff call for at least one outstanding scholar from each of the world's major religions. Basic to the program, the initial announcement said, is a belief that "ecumenism, cultural interchange and cooperation are no longer options — without them, there is no survival."

'The Best Rabbi in Boston'

Boston — (NC) — There was a standing-room-only Jewish audience in suburban Medford and, no doubt at all, the speaker was the magnetic drawing power.

A longtime favorite with Protestant, Jewish and, of course, Catholic audiences, the speaker had gained the sobriquet "the best rabbi in Boston" from a Jewish taxi driver a few years back. The speaker was Boston's Richard Cardinal Cushing.

In the lobby of the Medford Jewish Community Center, a Jewish father escorting his young son was heard to say: "Come inside. I want to show you a great man."

The applause and cheers thundered when Cardinal Cushing took over the speaker's platform. In his pocket was a prepared address. It stayed there. The cardinal chose to speak "off the cuff" in his inimitable style. He spoke about bigotry, atheism,

the Kennedy family, the death of his old friend Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., and sundry other topics.

He began by relating: "I'm somewhat handicapped today because I have no teeth. I can't eat and I can't talk. As for the latter it may be a good thing because every time I talk I get into trouble."

Switching thoughts, the cardinal then made a plea for love in the world.

"Behind the scenes there is much bigotry, much hatred. Everything depends upon love. Let us practice our love for one another," he said.

Hate, bigotry and greed lead to war, the cardinal warned. "A world war now would result in total destruction of our civilization if not the human race," he counseled.

He eulogized Cardinal Bea, compared him to the late President John F. Kennedy.

"They both tried to sow the seeds of love for one another," he said.

Cardinal Cushing talked at considerable length about the Kennedy family, the tragedies in their lives.

"Think of all the trials this family has gone through. Think of all the crosses they have carried and you never hear a word of complaint on the lips of any of them," he said.

"Mrs. Rose Kennedy, the queen of the household," he added, "is a very, very extraordinary woman — never any regrets or fears, never asking, 'Why did all this happen?'"

"The youth of the world hopes for another Jack Kennedy."

"He is tremendously needed for the unification of the country which seemingly is divided against itself," the cardinal estimated.

Priest Honored By Jews He Saved

Jerusalem — (NC) — A Belgian priest who saved many Jews when they were children hunted by the nazis is a guest now of 50 of them who live in Israel.

Honored for his exploits of a quarter-century ago, Father Joseph Andre remarked, "I was only doing my duty as a Christian and a priest, and I was only one of many."

The 60-year-old priest received a medal from Yad Vashed, an Israeli government office set up to honor "non-Jews who risked their lives to rescue Jews from nazi persecutors." He was asked to plant a tree on Jerusalem's Memorial Mount.

Recalling the early 40's in Namur, Belgium, where he was a curate, Father Andre said:

"During the cold winter of 1941 I was visiting the poorer families of the parish and was told of a 'Flemish' family recently settled there that does not go to Mass."

"When I called I soon discovered that they were Jews from Germany trying to escape the nazis and were especially anxious about their two sons. I offered to hide the boys and readily promised that they would be brought up as Jews. With episcopal approval, we arranged for rabbinical services whenever possible."

"Before long," Father Andre continued, "other Jewish boys approached us and none was ever refused. We sometimes had as many as 40 at a time in and near the rectory."

"Though the German military headquarters were not far away, with sentries constantly on duty, not one child was discovered by them, even though eventually there were Gestapo raids on the rectory."

"Bishop Andre Charue of Namur helped us. So did Father Charles Himmer, now bishop of Tournai, the local mayor and council, and in fact the whole population. Likewise the Antwerp and Brussels clergy."



Protestant at Roman University

Dr. Robert Nelson is the first Protestant faculty member of the 400-year-old Gregorian University in Rome, considered one of the key Catholic schools for the training of bishops. The Jesuit university was founded during the Protestant Reformation to train priests for work in Germany. It has become an international university whose alumni include many cardinals, bishops and theologians. Dr. Nelson, a Methodist clergyman, is teaching a graduate seminar on the impact of the ecumenical movement on the theology of the Church. He is a member of the Boston University Theological School. (RNS)

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