



**Express Gratitude to Pope**

Giacomo Chiamura kisses the ring of Pope Paul VI as some of the other Italian oil workers who had been held captive in Biafra look on. In an emotional scene at the Vatican, one of the men told the pontiff, "We are very grateful for all you have done for us." The 18 men, taken prisoner after fighting swirled around their work camp in Nigeria, were freed from a death sentence when the Pope and other leaders had appealed to Biafra to spare their lives. (RNS)

**Freed by Biafra, Oilmen Meet Pope**

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, in an extraordinary midnight audience, received 18 oil workers whom his appeals, among others, had rescued from execution in Biafra. The 18 men, including 14 Italians, three Germans and a Lebanese, had sent a cable to the Pope, thanking him for his intervention and asking for the audience.

During the 40-minute meeting here, the Pope stressed the impartiality of Catholic relief work in Nigeria, thanked those who had helped

to secure the men's release and expressed regret at the death of other oil workers during the fighting around Owerre when Biafra recaptured the area.

Later, during his regular Sunday noon appearance to lead pilgrims in the recitation of the Angelus, the Pope described his meeting with the men and the efforts to obtain their release.

"These good men were very moved," he said. "They had been wel-

comed by the Italian President, by members of their families and directors of their company. They were accompanied on their return journey by the African bishop of Port-Harcourt (Bishop Godfrey Okoye), and before going their various ways they wanted to express their thanks, participating in the common joy for their safe return and in the mourning for their 10 fellow workers killed in the harmless and honest execution of their duty."

**Bishop Shannon Makes It Official: He's Resigned**

Minneapolis — (RNS) — Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis has confirmed that he submitted his resignation last Nov. 23 as an auxiliary bishop and as pastor of St. Helena's church here.

In a hand-written letter to William L. Thorkelson, religion editor of the Minneapolis Star, the bishop said the resignation was contained in a letter to Archbishop Leo Binz, head of the archdiocese. The archbishop was asked to forward the requests "to the proper authorities in Rome."

The bishop submitted his resignation two months after he wrote Pope Paul that he was unable to accept his teaching on birth control.

Later, he disclosed in the letter to Mr. Thorkelson, he was urged by Pope Paul's personal representative in this country, Archbishop Luigi Raimondi, the Apostolic Delegate, to go abroad and live, but without any Church assignment.

He rejected this proposal and said he had accepted an offer to continue as a tutor during the Summer at St. John's College, a non-denominational school in Santa Fe, N.M. He has been teaching there for the past four months while on a leave from the archdiocese.

**Bishop Requests Priests, Don't Act on My Behalf**

St. Paul, Minn. — (RNS) — A surprise message from Bishop James P. Shannon blunted efforts of supporters to get some action in his behalf from the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis.

The senate, which convened a special meeting to consider what to do about the bishop's resignation as auxiliary bishop following dissent from Pope Paul's birth control encyclical, did, however, approve two statements praising the bishop.

Bishop Shannon in his message to the senate, declared:

"I respectfully request my brother priests to abstain from any public statement or action regarding my present status and recent public stories concerning me.

"I feel very strongly that no good would come from such action at this time. I even believe positive harm would come for the Church if such a course would be followed."

Bishop Shannon asked instead that the senate give "a vote of confidence, support and encouragement" for Archbishop Leo Binz and Coadjutor Leo Byrne of the Archdiocese.

"They have gone far beyond their duty in trying to help and counsel me in these recent difficult months," he said.

Before the meeting, priests supporting the bishop had caucused and decided to request the senate to convene a board of inquiry into the resignation, to endorse a protest march, to seek openness in the operations of the Archdiocese and to affirm the

right of bishops to dissent from non-infallible papal teachings and remain bishops.

After receiving Bishop Shannon's message, the senate declined to endorse a march but it did support a prayer service in behalf of Bishop Shannon, the Catholic Church and leaders of the Archdiocese.

(A group of 60 priests, acting independently of the senate, later arranged for an afternoon march June 8 from the St. Paul Cathedral to a mall near St. Paul Seminary ending in a prayer service. The senate sponsored an evening prayer service in the Cathedral.

**Yale Honors Bishop Shannon**

New Haven, Conn. — (NC) — Bishop James P. Shannon, who has confirmed his resignation as auxiliary bishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis, was honored by the Yale University graduate school for achieving eminence in church governance.

Bishop Shannon and three other Yale alumni received the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal at the Yale commencement program June 9.

The honor was established two years ago by the Yale Graduate School Association in memory of the famous Yale dean who served as governor of Connecticut from 1930 to 1938.

**When a Bishop Resigns - - -**

**'Priesthood in My Opinion . . . The Most Honorable Fraternity.'**

Following is a partial text of the letter of Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of St. Paul and Minneapolis, to William Thorkelson of the Minneapolis Star, regarding confirmation of his having submitted his resignation as auxiliary bishop and as pastor to Archbishop Leo Binz of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Dear Mr. Thorkelson,

Since your publication last week of a portion of my strictly confidential correspondence with our Holy Father Pope Paul VI, I have been deeply troubled by some of the news stories and the speculation which your article has occasioned. The past few days have been for me a period of extreme personal tension and anguish.

In the interest of truth and accuracy, I should like therefore to set the record straight on a few facts which have been garbled in some stories I have seen and some new facts not yet revealed in the press.

It is true that I did submit my formal resignation, both as a pastor and as an auxiliary bishop in a letter to Archbishop Leo Binz on Nov. 23, 1968. At that time, I explicitly asked him to forward those requests to the proper authorities in Rome. I presume that he did so.

As a result (I also presume) of this letter, I was invited to Washington, D.C., for an interview with Archbishop Luigi Raimondi, Apostolic Delegate, in the United States. In the visit, he indicated to me that the Holy See would accept my resignation, and proposed that I consider one

of three possible future assignments outside the United States.

I reported these options to Archbishop Leo Binz, and (Coadjutor) Archbishop Leo C. Byrne in a letter in which I also stated that I did not believe that I could serve the needs of the Church in any of these unspecified foreign posts.

Shortly thereafter, Archbishop Binz informed me by letter that he had discussed these options in person with Archbishop Raimondi and that in his visit only two such foreign places were mentioned, not three, as I understood.

Some weeks later I was again invited to Washington to confer with the Apostolic Delegate. He inquired whether I had reached any decision. I said I had not. He then asked if it would help if additional foreign places were added to my list of options and proposed several other countries. I inquired more particularly about the nature of such assignments and discovered that he did not mean official posts or canonical appointments. He explained that if I could arrange to be invited to one of the countries we had discussed, he would help me complete the move and would assure me of adequate financial support. It became clear to me at the time that we were discussing only a place of residence for me after I should leave the United States.

In all of these discussions the question I was addressing was not whether my resignation was accepted

but where I would choose to live in the future.

It has now become clear to me that I cannot bring myself to accept any of these invitations.

I have been invited by the Board of Visitors and Governors of St. John's College in Santa Fe, N.M., to return there as a tutor in the summer program, beginning three weeks from now. I have accepted this invitation.

Needless to say, I am today a deeply troubled man. Next week completes my 23rd year as a member of the Catholic priesthood, in my opinion, the most honorable fraternity in the world. I am aware that the statements I have made in this letter may well be to many good persons (among them my family, friends, classmates and parishioners) a scandal, a stumbling block in the literal sense. And yet, each statement I have given is true. Can the truth be a 'scandalum'?

Please pray for me.

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