

Papal Unit Cites Brazil Persecutions

From Our European Bureau

Vatican City—Pope Paul last week called on his Justice-Peace Commission to help him skirt — at least for the present — a politically explosive issue in connection with persecutions of Catholics in Brazil.

Rather than risk "the political involvement" of making a statement on the imprisonment and torturing of Catholic priests, religious and laity in the Latin American country, the pontiff let his commission speak for him.

Vatican officials agreed, as reported in this newspaper last week, that the Pope faced a hazardous task in making any pronouncement about the persecutions.

They likewise agreed that he faced equally harsh treatment in public opinion if he failed to address himself to the charged government intimidations.

The pontiff was put on the spot several weeks ago when he was given a "black book" claiming to document at least 11 specific cases of government torture and imprisonment of Roman Catholics in Brazil.

The dossier was compiled under the sponsorship of a group of Italians and Frenchmen and its presentation to the Holy See was done with a great deal of fanfare, thus making it known to the world that Pope Paul is aware of conditions in the world's most Catholic country.

Late last week, Cardinal Maurice Roy of Canada, president of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, issued a formal statement in which he warned the Brazilian government that the commission could "not remain deaf" to the allegations that had been made.

The Canadian prelate said Pope Paul "follows with vigilant attention, the situation of the Church in Brazil, on which he is constantly kept informed."

Even in his statement, the cardinal was cautious to avoid any political dispute by noting that the commission itself could make no political judgment.

"But we cannot remain deaf to Christian conscience which rightly reacts to attacks and violations . . . of human rights in many countries."

He noted that the Church in Brazil several times has made known its distaste for the conditions under which the nation's more than 80 million Catholics are forced to live.



Byzantine Rite Liturgy

Byzantine Rite Patriarch Maximos V, second from left, the Patriarch of Antioch and All The East, enters the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, to celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy during the 1970 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The group, from left: Melkite Archbishop Armand J. Jacopin, director of St. Paul Center Byzantine-Melkite Information Bureau, Washington; Patriarch Maximos; the Rev. Elias Zahlou, secretary to the Patriarch; and the Most Rev. Michael Dudick, Eparch of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Passaic, N.J. (Religious News Service)

Priest Backs Nixon Plan To Curb Pornography

Washington, D.C.—(RNS)—A Jesuit editor told a congressional committee here that the U.S. Catholic Church backs the Nixon administration's proposal to curb the "smut flood" which uses the mails "for the transfer of destructive materials" into the hands of youth.

Observing that some 230,000 complaints against unsolicited mailings of pornographic and obscene materials were recorded during the last fiscal year, Father John McLaughlin, S.J., said "the citizens of this country are rightly vexed by this traffic."

"A milieu that is sexually permissive," he added, "can engender in youngsters the inclination to view life as an excursion into mindless, hedonistic self-indulgence, rather than as a responsible trust for which they will be held accountable."

The priest, who is an associate editor of America, the Jesuit weekly review published in New York, testified before the House Judiciary Committee on behalf of the U.S. Catholic

Conference, which serves as a national secretariat of the U.S. Catholic bishops.

The House committee is weighing more than 200 bills aimed at halting the free flow of pornographic materials via the U.S. post office.

President Nixon's proposal asks Congress to make it a federal crime to use the mails to send offensive materials to any youngster under 18 and to protect homes against unwanted, unsolicited, sex-oriented advertising.

Father McLaughlin said such legislation is especially needed at this time. "The inundation of this country with prurient mail solicitations to youngsters may reasonably be assumed to figure significantly in the spread of . . . social disorders."

"There exists a large body of evidence and authority attesting that such material as proscribed by the Administration's measure . . . exerts a significant morbid influence on teenage development and behavior."

Women to Distribute Communion in Dubuque

Dubuque, Iowa — (NC) — The archdiocese of Dubuque has announced the appointment of 49 women and laymen as "extraordinary ministers" for the distribution of Communion.

The 49 named by Archbishop James J. Byrne include five nuns and three laywomen, one Religious Brother, a seminary student and 39 laymen. Others are being considered.

The laymen include bankers, insurance salesmen, college professors and farmers.

A chancery spokesman said permission for non-ordained persons to distribute the Eucharist was given because of the large number of Communion in many parishes in the archdiocese and the shortage of priests in others. This is the first time such permission has been granted in Iowa.

An "upsurge" in Communion at Immaculate Conception parish in

Cedar Rapids, for instance, prompted Father Roger O'Brien, pastor, to submit the names of 19 parishioners for extraordinary minister status.

The 49 extraordinary ministers will serve in 16 of the archdiocese's 201 parishes.

Decent Literature Offices Moved

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — The headquarters of the National Office for Decent Literature (NODL) has been transferred from Chicago to the nation's capital.

NODL was founded by the American Catholic hierarchy in 1938. Its principal function has been to review and evaluate magazines, comic books and paperback books, especially those intended for young people, and publish the results of such evaluations.

Tennessee Laity Also Get Right

Nashville — (RNS) — Permission for laymen to distribute communion will be granted to any priest or parish in Tennessee that evidences a need for such help, it was announced here.

Bishop Joseph A. Durick of Nashville, said the Vatican granted the Nashville diocese permission "for mature and reputable members of the laity to help priests in the distribution of Holy Communion . . ."

He said such permission will be granted:

- When difficulty is involved in discharging this ministry due to a priest's illness, infirmity or age, or

- When inconvenience within the congregation is experienced by unduly prolonged distribution of Holy Communion.

'Liturgical Week' Canceled, Funds, Interest Waning

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — The 1970 Liturgical Week, scheduled for Boston in August, was canceled here by the board of directors of the National Liturgical Conference due to lack of funds and organizational difficulties.

Hold annually since 1940, the Liturgical Week had been the high spot of the conference's annual work until the last few years when attendance fell off drastically and criticism of its activities mounted.

Father Joseph M. Connolly, conference chairman and pastor of St. Catherine of Siena church, Baltimore, said the 1970 week was canceled by the unofficial liturgical organization's directors because of "basic organizational problems" and among these the lack of funds was most crucial.

"We are in rather strained financial circumstances," he said, explaining that the conference lost money on the two Liturgical Weeks in Milwaukee (1969) and Washington (1968).

It was pointed out that from an all-time high attendance of about 18,000 in 1964 at St. Louis, Liturgical Week last year dropped to 1,650 persons registered.

In addition, both Liturgical Weeks

were controversial events. In both the Washington and Milwaukee programs, which drew the criticism of local prelates, the liturgy was linked with social causes, such as civil rights, peace and poverty. Also, in both cases the local archdiocese neither co-sponsored nor gave approval to the Weeks.

It was pointed out that the liturgical movement itself is suffering from increased indifference by the Catholic community. Since the implementation of Vatican II decrees on the liturgy, the battle of the liturgy is won, it was said, and the future of the movement is unclear.

Father Connolly said he could not foretell a possible rebirth of the liturgical week in coming years, but suggested that regional weeks might replace the national observance. He said the future will depend on the reaction of the conference members.

The priest pointed out that the demise of Liturgical Week had little bearing on the health of the conference itself, noting that membership is at an all-time high of 9,600 and growing. He said the publications function of the conference was expanding. It will soon issue a new liturgical manual of new Mass texts and commentary.

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