

Pope Paul Gains Wide Support For Stand on Priestly Celibacy

(By NC News Service)

Though controversy on the issue of mandatory celibacy for priests persists, Church leaders around the world are rallying in ever-growing numbers behind the firm position of Pope Paul VI.

Prelates joining with their national conferences, or speaking individually, have made strong public pronouncements supporting the Pope's insistence that the celibacy law must remain in force.

For example the Scottish bishops issued a joint declaration backing the Pope and asserting that such a stand reflects the thinking of most of their Catholics.

It is rare for the Scottish bishops to make public statements outside their semiannual meetings.

The Scottish bishops said they "have no reservations" on the subject of celibacy, declaring themselves "in complete accord with the Holy Father in his courageous defense of this sacred and treasured tradition in the Catholic priesthood which makes possible that complete and undivided dedication to the service of God which is demanded of the priest."

On the other side of the world, the leader of the Bishops' Conference of the Pacific issued a statement reaffirming full support of the Pope.

Archbishop George H. Pearce, S.M.,

of Suva, Fiji, noted that the conference at its last meeting, in June 1969, had unanimously affirmed the pro-celibacy position "as laid down in the actual Code of Canon Law, as reaffirmed in the numerous documents of the Second Vatican Council, and as restated so beautifully and so forcefully by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical 'Sacerdotalis Caelibatus,' and since reaffirmed by him in many public statements."

The bishops of Ecuador adopted a statement supporting celibacy, declaring it to be a "centuries-old tradition launched by Christ's three-fold counsel of poverty, chastity and obedience."

John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster, at two meetings of his diocesan clergy in London, stressed support for the views of the Second Vatican Council on celibacy. The cardinal said that, while he was not criticizing the Dutch bishops, he believed their failure to support the Holy See "inevitably led neighboring bishops in France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland to exercise collegiality by affirming in unequivocal language their firm support for Pope Paul in defense of celibacy for the clergy of the Latin Church."

The cardinal deplored the fact that "the plain teaching of the Second Vatican Council could so soon be contradicted" and cited the overwhelming votes at the council for reaffirming obligatory celibacy for priests in the Western Church.

In the Netherlands, Bernard Cardinal Alfrink of Utrecht was quoted as expressing doubt that "liquidation of the celibacy law would attract more young men" to the priesthood, but he added that if the law were not changed "more priests would leave" the ministry. "I consider that an argument," he said, but also asserted that he thought "it would be a disaster if the unmarried priest would disappear."

In Austria, Franziskus Cardinal Koenig of Vienna and Archbishop Johann Weber of Graz, in interviews with the Catholic news agency, Kathpress, there, emphasized that the recent statement of the Austrian bishops supporting the Pope's position on celibacy was not directed against the Dutch bishops or Dutch Catholics, or against the National Dutch Pastoral Council as a whole for their advocacy of optional celibacy. The prelates said the Austrian bishops' statement was opposed to the Dutch decisions because they believed "such a decision cannot be made without considering its impact" on other countries.

Cardinal Koenig said, however, that he did not consider any statements by Pope Paul on celibacy as blocking the way to further discussions on that question. He announced that dialogue on celibacy between the Austrian and Dutch bishops will be undertaken in the near future.



Solving the Parking Problem

The capital of Italy, with its narrow winding streets and multitude of automobiles, is not an easy city to find a parking place in. The pastor of Santa Maria church near the famed Trevi Fountain found an answer to his personal parking problem. He simply places a ramp on the stairs of a side entrance to his church and wheels his little car inside. (Religious News Service)

Task Force Establishes National Unit for Nuns

St. Louis — (NC) — A 42-member national task force of women Religious completed plans here for a nationwide organization to represent some 165,000 Sisters in the United States.

The plan will be submitted for approval to the third National Meeting for Women Religious April 17-19 in Cleveland, at which an attendance of 3,000 is expected.

The proposed organization, to be known as the National Association for Women Religious (NAWR), would have six principal objectives:

- To give impetus and direction to the organization of local groups of women Religious.
- To work for greater participation of women Religious in the decision-making process and the implementation of decisions on local and national Church levels.
- To provide channels through which women Religious may speak with one voice.
- To share research by means of published newsletters, editorials and statements.
- To establish a national office to support and service local Sisters' organizations.
- To conduct an annual meeting which would focus attention of Sisters on current issues.

The meeting here also proposed a 20-member steering committee be elected at the Cleveland convention to serve as an interim governing body until delegates and national officers could be elected.

The task force recommended adoption of a plan to provide for open membership of all Religious women in the NAWR while at the same time assuring equal representation for individuals, councils of Sisters and other organizations of nuns.



New Rector

Father John W. Manning, M.M., of Boston, was named by Pope Paul VI as rector of Rome's Pontifical Urban College. He will be the first American to serve that post. The Maryknoll priest has been a secretary to Gregory Cardinal Agagianian, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, since 1958. The college which Father Manning will head is maintained for the education of seminarians from mission territories. (RNS)

End Fratricide, Pope Tells Brazil

Delo Horizonte, Brazil — (NC) — Brazilians have been urged by Pope Paul VI to end "fratricidal wars" and eliminate "unjust social and economic conditions."

The Pope's appeal was televised to this strife-torn country as the permanent committee of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference ended four days of deliberations here on such subjects as violence, the arrests of clergymen, divorce and changes in the liturgy of the Mass.

In December 1968, a military regime started ruling by decree on grounds that subversive groups were trying to overthrow the government, and hundreds of persons, including priests and Catholic lay leaders, have been arrested. Both Brazilian and international groups have charged that the government is torturing political prisoners, and a dossier containing data on the torture charges was sent to Pope Paul by a European group.

The Brazilian bishops, deploring the chain of violence and oppressive countermeasures by the authorities, have urged the military junta to move toward "normal legal" rule by returning to constitutional government and permitting the normal function-

ing of the congress and the judiciary.

In his televised message, Pope Paul told Brazilians they must "exercise a fair balance between strength and Christian prudence and a generosity that will eliminate the unjust social and economic conditions, so dehumanizing, and all kinds of fratricidal wars." He said that the condition of men requires people to help their "brother in his human and religious needs."

The permanent committee included discussions on preparations for the meeting of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference, scheduled for the eve of the National Eucharistic Congress in Brasilia, the new capital, May 23-31.

The arrest of priests and Religious on charges of subversion was taken up at the committee's meeting.

Archbishop Albert Gaudencio Ramos of Belem confirmed that the bishops are concerned about the status of about a dozen priests in jail. He said the bishops "assured the arrested priests of their moral support" and are providing religious assistance to them.

In an unprecedented move, the

permanent committee sent what Archbishop Ramos described as "a message of moral support to our jailed brothers in Paraguay, including several Brazilian priests who suffer persecution from the government" in that country.

Neighboring Paraguay has been shaken since mid-1969 by a showdown on human rights between the Church and the government of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner. At least two priests have been expelled. Students, priests, women and the elderly have reportedly been subjected to police violence.

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2 Scot Churches Reject Merger

Edinburgh — (RNS) — A proposed plan of union between the national Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) and the Congregational Union of Scotland has been rejected in a close vote by the Church after 10 years of dialogue and negotiation.

The Church of Scotland's presbyteries rejected the plan by a majority of two—30 presbyteries for and 32 against. Only one presbytery, that of Spain and Portugal, did not vote.

The Congregational vote was similarly narrow, with 53 con-

gregations voting for union against 60 opposed.

A joint statement said that the results of the voting will be reported to the annual Assemblies of the Churches in May.

The Church of Scotland has 1,250,000 members and the Congregational Union about 30,000 communicant members. Union conversations began in 1960 and culminated in the production of a draft plan for union which was put before the two Assemblies—the Presbyterians in Edinburgh and the Congregationalists in Glasgow—in May last year.



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