

Pope's Frequent Theme: Pray for Our Priests

By ROBERT HOLTON

Vatican City — Pope Paul more and more in recent weeks has been soliciting prayers for Catholic clergymen throughout the world who are troubled in their ministerial life.

Although the underlying reason for his appeals is the current clerical and lay unrest about the mandatory priestly celibacy law, the pontiff of late has been avoiding direct mention of chastity.

An address he gave to pilgrims in St. Peter's Square was an example of his most recent

approach to the problem.

"We wish you to pray for the priests these days," he said. "For their sanctity, for their faithfulness, for their total and exclusive dedication to your service."

He went on to cite the responsibilities of priests in relation to the needs of the people they serve.

"The people of God must have, in its priests, holy pastors and teachers, servants and inspirers, all for and all of Christ," he stressed.

He counseled that these priests must "not be extraneous to the rank and file of the people, to their needs and sufferings" but he sounded the warning against allowing this close contact with the masses to warp their interpretation of duty.

He cautioned priests against becoming "mixed up with worldly forms and secular interests."

"Pray for the priests," he said, "to help them be true ministers of God and true ministers to you."

The papal message was a clear directive to the laity to demand high standards of their clergy.

He has made other similar appeals of late in what this observer interprets as a bid for lay backing of his demand that priests in the Latin Rite remain celibate.

Some critics maintain that the pontiff has no right to issue such appeals, which they look upon as "bits of blatant lobbying on the public stage."

However, the Pope is well

within the bounds of propriety in using his oratory to seek backers for a cause in which he believes so strongly.

Those seeking optional priestly celibacy have not been shy about courting the laity and priests alike to join their drive for an international discussion of the topic.

Pope Paul apparently has decided to fight fire with fire in an all-out campaign to awaken in the laity a feeling that they have the right to demand certain standards in the men who tend to their spiritual needs.

Pope to List 15 Bishops for Synod Posts

Vatican City—Pope Paul VI will soon name the 15 prelates who will be added to the permanent secretariat of the World Synod of Bishops.

Bishop Ladislau Rubin, synod secretary general, said last week: "I would like it to be today. But I must wait. It is in the hands of the Holy Father."

"I should expect the announcement in a few days," he said. "But perhaps it could be in a week or two."

The Polish prelate strongly indicated that the announcement would come in ample time for the beefed-up secretariat to have its first meeting within two weeks after Easter Sunday.

"The first 12 of the bishops were elected by the bishops of the world and the Holy Father has chosen an additional three bishops," he said.

The bishop indicated that the electors had completed their balloting and the selection of the winning dozen was made only in the last week. The pontiff, it was learned, chose his three representatives with an eye toward filling in any major nationality representation gap that might have been created by the voting.

The addition of the 15 bishops was one of the major recommendations of the Extraordinary Synod held here last October. Two other recommendations of that body were also accepted by the Pope in a speech he gave closing the synod.

Blacks to Vote On Viet War

New York — (RNS)—Voting in a National Black Referendum on Vietnam has been extended to April 30, largely because the postal strike delayed receipt of materials used in the poll.

Balloting was begun in black churches on March 22, Palm Sunday, and was to have been concluded on Easter Sunday, March 29. Irvnig Davis, coordinator, said black churchmen had asked for a month's extension.

He said information which student groups had planned to use during their Easter recess had not reached local communities because of the delay in mail delivery.

The ballot asks black citizens to answer yes or no to this statement: "I vote for the total immediate withdrawal of all American troops and money from Vietnam."

Among the groups backing the referendum is the National Committee of Black Churchmen.



Pope Paul makes plans for bishops' synod. (RNS)

Catholic Doctors Assail Abortion Law Repeal

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a massive relaxing of the law already has occurred.

- It would increase intense and unfair pressure on hospital and clinic staff nurses to take part in abortions despite their personal feelings and medical beliefs.

- It would bring an era of "bad medical practice" and would crowd "the already overtaxed medical abilities of New York" as has happened in Britain and Hawaii.

- It would void the usual and ordinary protections of the law for a woman who might seek an abortion under the statute, since a doctor legally could perform it in his office or in her home "with all the accompanying risks of infection, disease and death."

"Let there be no question," the letter declared. "As Catholic physicians we find all abortion intolerable . . . unless it works to the good of the threatened life of the mother in the case of a clear conflict of rights of mother and child."

The letter also reiterated that the Guild's strong opposition to relaxing the abortion law "comes from our respect for human life and our belief that life is sacred and that no one, especially a physician, should be encouraged by law to count one life as worth more than another."

Meanwhile, in Boston, Auxiliary Bishop Timothy Harrington of Worcester predicted that seven million unborn children would die in the United States in the next two years as a re-

sult of more flexible abortion laws.

The Worcester prelate strongly criticized attempts to make what he termed feticide more socially acceptable. "The basic flaw in this approach," he declared, "will always be that it makes an innocent human being the victim of people who take it upon themselves to exercise God's prerogative."

Bishop Harrington reminded that the Judaic-Christian ethic reaffirms the principle that life is a sacred gift, and that the inalienability of the right to life is guaranteed by the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Last week in London, England, protagonists of legalized abortion, introduced in Britain two years ago, began to admit that the situation is getting out of hand.

In the face of adverse public reactions to the law's unsavory practical results, abortion lobbyists have asked the government to impose tighter controls in obvious concern over the growing disapproval.

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Bp. Hogan Arrives In Rio de Janeiro

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soph Sisters' foundation was begun six years ago.

Here he visited Sisters Catherine Popowich, Mary Ann Coughlin, Carolyn Cardinal, Barbara Orczyk and Marie Barbara Bergmaier. These Sisters are directors of four elementary schools and a junior high school in Paranaiguara and Canal San Sinao nearby.

The Bishop of Jatai, Most Rev. Benedict Coschia, O.F.M., in whose diocese the Rochester Sisters are based, joined Bishop Hogan for his next trip onward to the city of Cachoeira Alta where Sisters Virginia Schmitz, Anne Lafferty and Marilyn Dewey are catechists and teachers in a junior high school.

"I was very impressed with the enthusiasm and the dedication of the Sisters," Bishop Hogan said reviewing his impressions of the inland tour.

"It was easy to see how well they have been received by the people. Their teaching in the community schools has had an obvious effect on the neighborhoods.

"The great share of their work with the youth, the Cursillo movement and young married couples makes them highly respected."

Ground travel is difficult in central Brazil, the Bishop said but his jumps between the Sisters' mission stations were made in the Bishop Coschia's 6-seat diocesan plane.

The New Courier-Journal . . . Hope You Like It

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livered and read in every home in the diocese."

The Courier editors have chosen a five-column page to provide more eye-pleasing reading. Technically, columns are 11 picas wide with one pica between for satisfying white space.

Looks, of course, mean little of themselves and improved content is a major goal. One new feature is Courier/2, a second section devoted entirely to feature and entertainment material.

Included are the new educational series "Know Your Faith," which will include columns by Father Walter Abbott on Scriptures, Father Joseph Champlin on Liturgy and Father Richard McBrien on questions concerning Vatican II.

Other guest columnists, mainly laymen, will augment this series.

Courier/2 will always be positioned in the center 12 pages

"The Bishop needs such transportation to cover his huge diocese. His pilot and the Piper Comanche plane were ready to go each time we were. Some of the landing spots we put down in were rather primitive by U.S. standards, believe me."

The Bishop reported that the living conditions of the Rochester Sisters were good and their spirit strong.

"They admitted to me that frustrations and loneliness come over them occasionally and they wished they weren't so far from home. But they were excited and warmly grateful for our visit and wanted us to convey their love to everyone back in Rochester."

Father Michael Conboy, the Bishop's secretary and Cliff Carpenter, editorial page columnist for the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, are accompanying Bishop Hogan.

Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate who staff the three parishes where the Rochester Sisters teach have been hosts for the Bishop's party at each overnight stay in Brazil.

After the La Paz visitation, the Bishop will fly to Santiago, Chile for 3 days with the Rochester Sisters of Mercy stationed in two parishes there.

He will land in Los Angeles on Friday, April 17, and after a week at the U.S. Bishops' semiannual meeting in San Francisco will arrive in Rochester on the 24th.

of the paper so it can be pulled out easily. It will include the centerfold which will include photo-features of local interest weekly.

Father John S. Kennedy, a nationally acclaimed book critic, also joins Courier/2 with his weekly review of books both secular and sacred.

Tried and true columnists such as Pat Costa on TV, and Sarah Child on family life brighten up Courier/2 pages. Recipes, women's news, movie listings all make it fresh and light reading.

The thought-provoking Father Paul J. Cuddy will continue to grace our Commentary page. He will be joined there by other columnists and new features.

The Commentary page and our Editorial page have been moved closer to the back of the paper to provide a better balanced, overall product.

All of this means little unless our readers are satisfied. We invite your comments and criticisms.