

Pontiff, Armenian Working for Unity

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI and Catholicos Vazken I, Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians, symbolically healed centuries of division by exchanging the "kiss of peace" in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, and pledging to strive for Christian unity.

Catholicos Vazken of Etchmiadzin in Soviet Armenia is head of the largest of the two Armenian branches. The second is the Catholicosate of Cilicia, now headquartered in Lebanon, and led by Catholicos Khoren. The two have existed since the 15th Century, with the primacy of honor held by Etchmiadzin until 1956. At that time, adherents of Cilicia repudiated the authority of the Soviet-based Catholicos. Attempts to heal the split have progressed in recent years.

After the symbolic embrace, Vazken I knelt and prayed that men would "close the book of differences" and work for peace.

Turning, then, to the Pope, he said his Church was "happy to participate in the ecumenical movement with her sister Churches and thus make progress toward unity in the love of Christ."

In his reply, Pope Paul re-

ferred to ancient theological disputes that separated Armenian Christians from Roman Catholics, and asked, "Has not the time come to clear up once and for all such misunderstandings inherited from the past?"

The central theological dispute revolved around the question: Who and what is Jesus Christ? The Church Council of Chalcedon in 480 defined that He is a divine person with two distinct natures, the nature of God and the nature of man.

The Armenian Church—which traces its foundations to the early 4th Century — rejected the decrees of the council and has been historically classified as "monophysite," that is, as holding that Jesus Christ has only a divine nature, his humanity being completely absorbed by his divinity.

Taking note of this divergence in doctrine, the Pope said, "Research into these doctrinal difficulties must be undertaken again, in order to understand what has brought them about and to be able to overcome them in a brotherly way."

There are some 300,000 Armenian Christians in the U.S. and 4.5 million throughout the world. The Armenian Church is considered within the Oriental Orthodox fold.



Pope Paul and Supreme Catholicos of the Armenian Church, Vazken I, embrace at Vatican meeting. (RNS)

Pope's RX for Peace

Recognize Human Dignity

Vatican City — (NC) — "Peace will prevail only if human dignity is recognized and if work

is at the service of man," Pope Paul VI has declared.

Development for peace is the development of "the good of every man," he said at an audience for 800 members of the Young Presidents' Organization, an association of young business executives.

"You are leaders of the world, and leaders you must be," he told the group, which represented 19 countries, including the United States.

"You are young, and the influence of your dynamism must be felt for the good of others. We cannot help but admire the goals that you have set up for yourselves."

Commenting on the congress theme of "One Planet, One People, One Purpose," the Pope said:

"The world is indeed small and, despite setbacks, the movement for fraternal unity is on. Our common purpose can be none other than to promote unity and the peace that both causes unity and results from it."

Bishops Urge Law--Not Force

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — The U.S. Catholic bishops used the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations not only to urge a final end to war but to call upon the United States to move boldly in an effort "to substitute the rule of law for the rule of force."

In a statement — approved well before the current Cambodian crisis—the bishops said that "as Americans we must acknowledge the reality of our massive power and take the lead in sharing it through strengthening the world organization."

"This calls for acceleration in the delicate exchange in which the U.S. and other nations experience a limitation of the power to act unilaterally and an expansion of the obligation to share the responsibility for global peace development."

The statement was approved by the Catholic bishops at their April 22 meeting in San Francisco, birthplace of the U.N.

The bishops called upon American Catholics to join in the appreciation of the "noble

purposes" of the U.N. and to "increase their knowledge and understanding" of the U.N.'s "efforts and achievements."

Commenting at length on the achievements of the U.N., especially in the areas of technical assistance, human rights and international law, the bishops pointed out there is little doubt that the U.N. "could move to that higher dimension of community and authority demanded by the contemporary crises of peoples."

The bishops went on to state that "as Christians and American citizens, we have a special responsibility to cherish and protect the life of men in community and to assist the U.N. to help us do so."

The Catholic prelates charged the United States not only to take the lead in new efforts to institutionalize a standby U.N. peacekeeping force and to help set up fact-finding, arbitration, conciliation and mediation mechanisms for settling political disputes, but to "take bold steps in the effort to substitute the rule of law for the rule of force."

Among other things the bishops urged were "a halt to the untrammelled pursuit of self-interest" in the country and more attention to the needs of the world's poor, a better response to developing nations with regard to world trade structures, and greater efforts to protect and promote human rights throughout the world.

Stating that the presence of Red China cannot be ignored, the bishops commended present efforts by the U.S. to develop "workable relationships" with the people of mainland China and urged wide public discussion of the subject.

Finally, the bishops reminded, the path of world peace is "obligatory because the world can no longer afford the luxury of completely autonomous and self-sustaining nation states." They urged the beginning of a "new international order in which mutual cooperation and respect for rights and duties will lead to . . . human solidarity and reflect the plan of the Creator Who made mankind one . . ."

Bishops Meet With Rhodesia Prime Minister

Salisbury, Rhodesia — (NC) — Two Catholic bishops and Prime Minister Ian Smith of Rhodesia met here May 9 to discuss the Land Tenure Act, which has threatened a serious confrontation between the government and Christian churches.

The prelates who met with the premier are Bishop Donal R. Lamont, O.Carm., of Umtali, president of the Rhodesian Bishops' Conference, and Bishop Alois Haene, S.M.B., of Gwelo.

Bishop Lamont has led the Rhodesian churches' attack on the land act, which divides the country geographically into separate white and black areas.

The Catholic bishops and other Christian leaders have threatened to defy the legislation and close their institutions. They claim that the land act makes it impossible for the churches to function because of restrictions hampering multi-racial work.

No details of the talks between the prime minister and the bishops were made public, but Bishop Lamont described the conversations as "very cordial" and said that Smith had agreed to meet representatives of all the churches.

Meanwhile Christians around the world have been asked by top ecumenical leaders to support the courageous stand of Rhodesian church leaders.

The appeal and a condemnation of the Smith government came from the executive and two key elected officials of the World Council of Churches. The signers were Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, WCC general secretary; M. M. Thomas, chairman of the policy-making Central Committee, and Miss Pauline Webb, vice chairman.

According to the WCC leaders the act is the cornerstone of an apartheid state.

Women Urged:

Combat 'Self-Destruction'

New York — (NC) — Heads of five national women's organizations urged women throughout the country by individual and collective power to combat a tendency toward "self destruction."

A four-point program was suggested by five presidents of organizations which have a total membership of some 40 million women. The program aims to support efforts toward peace and justice.

The five presidents proposed the four-point program which calls women:

- To enter into a dialogue in order to spread understanding of the issues which have divisive tendencies.
- To become listeners to the real message of voices raised in rage.
- To speak out as interpreters of the aspirations of those who cannot get a hearing.
- To support efforts of those

who seek justice through peaceful dissent.

The presidents said they admired American youth for "their passion for justice, their sensitivity to social and racial injustice, and their rejection of hypocrisy and oppression through their insistence that the nation live up to its highest ideals."

"We believe that women have the power to reverse the increasing momentum toward national self-destruction and therefore call upon all women to work individually and collectively to turn this tide," they said.

"It is our firm belief that if women—young and old — will increasingly risk themselves as a viable political force in the struggle for peace, racial and

economic justice, we will gain new strength to demand of the leaders of our land—locally and nationally—a moral reordering of priorities and a reversal in policies and procedures that can lead us toward peace and justice at home and abroad. The time to act is now," the presidents declared.

The statement was signed by Dorothy M. Height, New York, National Council of Negro Women; Mrs. Leonard H. Weiner, Huntington Woods, Mich., National Council of Jewish Women; Mrs. Norman Folda, Omaha, Neb., National Council of Catholic Women; Mrs. James M. Dolbey, Cincinnati, Church Women United and Mrs. Robert W. Clayton, Grand Rapids, Mich., Young Women's Christian Association.

Church Leaders Call for Peace

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per, the Register, which three years ago staunchly backed U.S. policy on Vietnam, has called for the withdrawal of American troops from Indochina as a new venture in "Christian risk-taking."

In Worcester, Mass., two bishops called for "renewed commitment to peace."

Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan and Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington, in a letter to Worcester Catholics, said:

"All sides in these protests and debates desire the same thing — peace. Unfortunately, growing out of decades of what many have called fratricide and what many others call frustration, political polarization seems to have overcome reason."

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