



### Little Nipper

Ronnie Brooks, 3, is little impressed with the dignity of a prince of the Church and bites the fingers of John Cardinal Krol, who had been chucking the lad under the chin at his annual Christmas party for handicapped youngsters in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. (RNS Photograph).

## Free Diplomat, Pope Urges

Madrid — (RNS) — Pope Paul issued an appeal for the release of the West German diplomat, Eugen Beihl, who was kidnaped Dec. 1 apparently as a hostage for 15 Basque nationalists.

The Basques — including two Roman Catholic priests — have been tried by courtmartial in Burgos, Spain, on charges of banditry, terrorism, and murder.

A note issued by the Apostolic Nunciature said that Mrs. Beihl, the diplomat's wife, had sent a cable to the nunciature asking papal intervention for the release of her husband.

"The Pope," the note said, "who has already intervened many times in defense of human rights, cannot remain indifferent to such an entreaty."

It added that the nunciature was "therefore, making public the Pope's ardent desire and prayer that Mr. Beihl will be freed and returned quickly to his family."

Beihl, West German honorary consul in the Basque provincial capital of San Sebastian, was seized, allegedly, by a splinter group of the Basque separatist organization, ETA (an acronym for the phrase, "Basque Fatherland and Liberty").

## Vatican Decree Now Official

Vatican City — (RNS) — A papal decree formally disbanding the pontifical gendarmerie and setting up a civilian law enforcement agency was published here Dec. 15.

The decree refers to a decision announced by Pope Paul VI on Sept. 14 and communicated by letter to Jean Cardinal Villot, Vatican Secretary of State.

In accord with the decree, the Papal Gendarmes — eight officers and 140 men — who functioned as the official "police" of the 108.7-acre Vatican City state, will cease all activities as of Jan. 20, 1971.

A new "central guard" office, which is to form a part of the administrative system of the Vatican city-state, will have a purely civilian character.



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