



Archbishop Casaroli, right, and Soviet official. (RNS)

## Catholics in U.S.S.R. Topic of Moscow Talk

Moscow — (RNS) — Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, secretary of the Vatican's Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, said here he hoped he had opened a dialogue with Soviet officials on the position of Roman Catholics in the Soviet Union.

The archbishop — to all intents and purposes the Pope's "foreign minister" — spoke to newsmen after celebrating Sunday Mass in the Church of St. Louis, Moscow's only Roman Catholic church, used principally by foreign diplomats and their families.

Formally here to sign a nuclear non-proliferation treaty on behalf of the State of Vatican City, the archbishop lunched with Semyon P. Kozyrev, the U.S.S.R.'s deputy Foreign Minister, held talks with government officials in charge of religious affairs, and participated in an ecumenical service with leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The top papal aide described his meeting with officials in charge of religious affairs as "a

relatively positive development."

"We have the feeling," he told newsmen, "that there was a spark, and that they have accepted the idea of a dialogue."

He said that Soviet authorities and the Catholic Church had held "mutual prejudices" for more than 50 years, but he said he felt that "a thaw" was beginning.

The archbishop said he had discussed the position of Catholics in the U.S.S.R., and stressed his hope that the dialogue between the Vatican and the Soviet Union would continue. The talks with government officials, he said, were conducted "in a very correct and generally cordial atmosphere."

Accurate figures are hard, if not impossible, at the present time, to come by, but various news sources say there are about 3½ million Catholics in the U.S.S.R., with a large percentage in the former Baltic republics of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, seized by the U.S.S.R. during World War II.

## Legislation to Be Asked On Abortion Referral Units

New York — (RNS) — Legislation to regulate abortion referral agencies will be recommended by the attorney general's office, according to Stephen Mindell, an assistant attorney general conducting an investigation into the practice.

Att. Gen. Louis J. Lefkowitz announced the investigation through his Bureau of Consumer Frauds and Protection when complaints were received about the operations of some agencies which will arrange abortions under New York's liberal law.

Mindell said that the investigation was concerned about the fees charged by the referral agencies, whether or not the

agencies were practicing medicine by giving medical advice, possible exaggerations in advertising claims, and whether or not out of state women were being "victimized" by the services.

Representatives of three abortion referral agencies testified before a public hearing conducted by the attorney general's office. Some agreed that certain regulations were needed.

Daniel S. Weiss, president of MEDREF, an eight-week old referral service, said that he felt the individual responsible for running such a service should be either a medical professional or a hospital administrator. He also suggested that each service have a medical advisory board, report regularly to the city Department of Health, be subject to a self-regulating board, and set a maximum fee of \$60.

He added that employees of referral services should be required to witness an abortion and discuss any questions they may have with a qualified gynecologist, and that all services retain professionally trained counselors, and provide birth control information.

Some restrictions should also be placed on marketing methods used by abortion referral agencies, Weiss added.

# Diocese Joins GEM

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GEM, born in early 1970 and organized by denominations rather than churches, is committed to a "common Christian mission beyond parish ministries and responsibilities." Policies will be set by a governing board of directors and its projects will be carried out by ad hoc committees.

The board will be composed of: two representatives from each member denomination; six from the Catholics; five appointed by the black Rochester Area Ministers Conference (RAM); four elected from "selectors" (neighborhood or regional groupings) defined by the board, and nine at-large members.

Members so far are Presbyterians, Methodists, American Baptists, United Church of Christ, Episcopalians, Reformed Church in America and RAM.

The greater Rochester area Eastern Orthodox Clergy Association has expressed interest in joining and the Lutheran Church in America has indicated it will join soon.

Formal diocesan contacts with area ecumenism go back to July, 1965 when Bishop James E. Kearney, following

the spirit of the Vatican Council and the U.S. Bishop's Commission on Ecumenical Affairs, named a five-priest group to be the Bishop's official channel of communications with other religious groups. The then-Msgr. John E. McCafferty was its first chairman.

Msgr. Charles V. Boyle, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church, Rochester, present chairman of the ecumenical commission, has been a member of the Area Council of Churches since 1969.

Revealing that plans for the new ecumenical vehicle to succeed the area Protestant council have been discussed for three years, Msgr. Boyle said that an agency based on large denominations rather than sep-

arate churches would "provide a stronger voice and more respected influence for the Christian message."

"I am very pleased with the decision of the Bishop and the Priests' senate to associate the diocese with GEM," he said. "It will enable us to share in a united Christian witness in our area. Our membership will supply a practical demonstration of our Catholic willingness never to do anything separately that we can in good Christian conscience do in concert."

The resolution to accept membership in GEM was made by the Very Rev. Joseph P. Brennan, rector of St. Bernard's Seminary, long associated with ecumenical projects in this area.

## Communion in Hand Approved in 10 Nations

The Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship has given permission to ten countries to distribute Communion in the hand. The United States is not one of the countries which received the permission.

According to Msgr. Annibale Bugnini, secretary of the congregation, permission will be given to any country which asks for it.

The countries named are: South Africa, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Yugoslavia, the Netherlands and French Somaliland.

At a meeting last November, the U.S. bishops voted 115 to 107 in favor of asking for such permission. This was a majority, but not the two-thirds majority required.

The issue is expected to rise again at the up-coming Spring meeting of the U.S. Bishops.

## Father Daniel Brent: Political Activism A Christian Responsibility

Political action to win school support from the state is a Christian responsibility toward social issues, Father Daniel Brent, diocesan Superintendent of Schools, told Sacred Heart Cathedral parishioners last Saturday.

Father Brent spoke at all Masses at the Cathedral to open a diocesan campaign of information and letter-writing in favor of the Parent-Aid Bill pending in the State Legislature.

Nearly all parishes distributed material from the diocesan Legislative Action Committee—Parent-Aid and urged immediate letters to area legislators.

Political action, Father Brent said, which is limited to voting once a year is not enough to make legislators know the Christian mind on issues of vital concern.

"We must take an interest in the social issues which confront our legislators. If you have not expressed yourself on the abortion issue you have neglected a great opportunity and responsibility.

"Now is the time to be heard on the education issue. Your letter to the legislative leader-

ship and to the Governor will influence decisions which may determine for years to come the state's posture toward the non-public school."

Father Brent stressed that the survival of the private school system was necessary "if the community is to have diversity in education—if we are to avoid a public education monopoly."

"We are at a time now in history when it's becoming impossible for the parents of Catholic school children to provide for school costs by themselves. Even the entire Catholic community cannot carry the increasing costs. We are at the point where we must ask help from our neighbors."

He discussed the comparative costs of the public and parochial school declaring that "from an economic point of view good sense calls for some assistance to nonpublic schools now."

"It's a question," he said, "of the public assisting parents in providing part of the \$250 or \$300 required to educate a student in a school like Sacred Heart, or paying the \$1,000-plus to educate the same student in the public schools."

## Students Join Drive For Parent-Aid Bill

Daniel Aureli of Cardinal Mooney High School and Mary Jane Valby of Mercy High School have been named to coordinate a student drive to press for passage of the Speno-Lerner Parent Aid School Bill at this session of the state Legislature.

As such they have joined the Legislative Action Committee—Parent Aid, a group of diocesan laymen with two objectives:

1. To get the bill out of committee.
2. To pressure for its passage in the state Legislature.

Aureli and Miss Valby head a committee made of representatives of high schools from throughout the diocese. The others are:

Colleen Brown and Kathy Beikirch of St. Agnes; Dwight

Larimer of McQuaid Jesuit; Linda Petrone of Nazareth Academy; Rita Leschander of St. Joseph's; John Herbert of Bishop Kearney; James Koss of Aquinas Institute; Roseanne Odidi and Kitty Karol of Geneva DeSales.

## We Are God's Chosen

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to reflect on the sacrifice Christ made for us—the sacrifice of His life that we might live, the sacrifice that He offered that we can be sure our sins are forgiven. His Divine Mercy is always present to us. We must repent, therefore, of our past faults. If we turn to God with a sincere heart, He is ready to accept us back into the divine family of which baptism made

us members.

We are God's chosen children. He has given us Heaven as our home. He has shown us the path to follow, a path that goes beyond the moon or any of the planets. When we think of the minute preparations that are made for each "Apollo" trip to the moon, could we be so foolish as to let some earthly pleasure or possession deprive us of our everlasting reward?

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