



Pope Paul at beatification ceremony. (RNS)

Pope Paul Proclaims Father Kolbe 'Blessed'

Vatican City —(RNS)— In a colorful and moving ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Paul VI solemnly proclaimed "blessed" a Polish Catholic priest who gave his life to save a fellow inmate of the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz 30 years ago.

Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan friar, thus became the first victim of a Nazi death camp to be beatified. Beatification is the preliminary step to possible eventual canonization, or proclamation of sainthood.

The ceremony was attended by 1,500 to 2,000 persons who had journeyed here from Poland — including Franciszek Gajowniczek, the former Polish Army sergeant whose life was spared by Father Kolbe's act.

About 1,000 West German Catholics, many of whom had survived Nazi concentration camps, attended. They were led by Auxiliary Bishop Johannes B. Neuhauser of Munich, a former inmate of Dachau. Present also was Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, exiled Primate of Hungary who had been jailed by the Nazis during World War II.

Ordinarily, during beatification ceremonies, the Pope sits by in the sanctuary, while another

Fewer Abortions in Military Hospitals Since Nixon Order

Washington, D.C. — (RNS)— Abortions at military hospitals have dropped sharply since President Nixon issued his directive requiring military hospitals to observe the abortion laws of the states in which they are located.

Statistics released by the Department of Defense indicated that military abortions for the first three quarters of the fiscal year 1971 — before the directive was issued — averaged 423 a month.

During the remaining three months of the fiscal year, following Nixon's order, abortions averaged 121 a month. There was a total of 4,167 abortions at military hospitals in the last year. The Defense Department had adopted a policy in the Spring of 1970 which exempted military hospitals from state laws governing abortion. This exemption was cancelled in April on the orders of President Nixon.

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Sell Vatican Art to Aid Poor, British Prelate Suggests to Pope

Vatican City—(RNS)— Cardinal John Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, has proposed that Pope Paul VI sell some of the Vatican's own art treasures "to buy food for the world's hungry." The British prelate also suggested that Catholic churches, monasteries and convents throughout the world should take inventory of any treasures they might have.

"There must be thousands of chalices, monstrances, and other sacred objects which are rarely used," he said, "and they could be sold to buy food for the hungry."

The cardinal spoke during the plenary session of the Synod of Bishops on Oct. 20. The session marked the second day of discussions on the synodal theme, "Justice in the World."

Recalling that Pope Pius XI had encouraged Catholic churches to sell their treasures to help meet a famine in Russia after World War I, Cardinal Heenan suggested that Rome itself should take the initiative.

"We know," he said, "that the treasures of the Vatican galleries belong to the world and should not therefore be

dissipated. Nevertheless, there would be great value in the example of the Holy See selling some of the masterpieces of art in the Vatican."

The cardinal also suggested that some of the properties belonging to the Vatican in various parts of the world might also be sold.

"The Holy Father has already established himself as the world's greatest leader in the fight for peace," he said. "I humbly suggest that he would give further impetus to his work for peace by encouraging churches throughout the world to sell all the precious objects and property they can "to relieve world want."

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Participation In Liturgy Urged

Washington — (RNS) — The Washington Council of Catholic Women has called for more "meaningful participation" by women in the liturgy in archdiocesan churches.

It also resolved at its annual convention to promote youthful representation on parish councils and to work for the eradication of racial inequalities both in churches and in society.

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other dignitary makes the proclamation. However, in an unprecedented action, Pope Paul himself pronounced the formula of beatification.

Speaking from the high altar of St. Peter's, the pontiff alluded to the "millions of human beings sacrificed to the pride and strength and madness of racism."

The Franciscan priest was arrested in 1941 on charges of aiding Jewish refugees and members of the Polish underground, and sent to Auschwitz, and there, the Pope said, "he performed the act of charity which makes him famous and now a Blessed."

"Father Kolbe," the Pope went on, "offered himself in replacement for an innocent stranger, a married man with a family. I am a Catholic priest," he said and his offering was accepted. This case and the tragic circumstances surrounding it remain typical and sum up all the other obscure and hidden sacrifices offered up in those barbarous times."

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