

NFPC Is Attacked---

New York — (RNS) — A report critical of the March convention of the National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC) charged that the federation is attempting to dismantle the hierarchical structure of the U.S. Catholic Church and is "destructive" to the priestly ministry.

Prepared by Father Kenneth Baker, SJ, editor of *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, a journal for priests, and Father Joel Munzing, OFM, of Paterson, N.J., the report was sent to priests in 13 archdioceses and dioceses and will be disseminated in nine other U.S. sees.

The six-page report released here and sent to more than 13,000 U.S. priests urged individual clergy and priests' senates and councils to disassociate themselves from the NFPC until it "aligns" itself with the "mind of the Church."

Father Baker attended the NFPC convention in March as correspondent for the *National Catholic Register*, Fort Worth, Tex., while Father Munzing represented *Our Sunday Visitor*, Huntington, Ind.; *New York's Catholic News*, and *Twin Circle*, National Catholic Press, Los Angeles.

In their report, the two priests claimed that a growing number of U.S. priests are discontinuing their membership in NFPC because of dissatisfaction with its actions and policies. They also challenged the federation's claim of 30,000 members among 55,000 U.S. Catholic priests, insisting that a "more realistic" figure would be "about 9,000."

The report said the featured speakers at the NFPC convention reflected "hostility toward the hierarchical structure . . . a spirit of indifference toward the

leadership role of the bishops; a downgrading, and even negation, of the supernatural ministry of the priesthood . . ."

The report added that sociopolitical activity was raised to "at least equal status with sacramental actions."

The critical document went on to state that Father Frank Bonnike, president of the NFPC, in proposing a clerical "job action" for June 29 to show support for a married clergy, has recommended "a course of action that is a monumental defiance of the teaching Church and a disgraceful abuse of the Mass."

"Though it may be a temptation to dismiss most of the NFPC leaders as ivory-tower revolutionaries," the report noted, "it would be a mistake to consider them incapable of making serious efforts to attain their goals down on the grassroots diocesan level."

The report particularly warned of an NFPC resolution calling for evaluations of priests and bishops in light of "new priorities" for the Church. It said that if implemented at the diocesan level, priests and bishops "would be at the mercy of NFPC guidelines" as to priorities and ministerial roles.

Challenging another resolution on the "popular nominations of bishops," the report said this "would go a long way toward dismantling the hierarchical structure of the Church, which arouses such hostility" from the NFPC.

Declaring that the NFPC is seeking to "usurp the bishops' leadership role, it asked: "how much longer can concerned priests tolerate an organization so destructive to their ministry?"

...and Answers

Chicago — (RNS) — While "thanking" two priest-critics for publicizing its work among more than 13,000 Catholic priests, the National Federation of Priests' Councils denied a charge that it has no desire to work with the official Church and said it maintains constant contact with the U.S. bishops.

In a reply to a six-page criticism of the March NFPC convention in Denver by Father Kenneth Baker, SJ, editor of *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, and Father Joel Munzing, OFM, of Paterson, N.J., the NFPC released a statement which also denied any "drastic fall-off" in members.

In its reply, the NFPC, which is headed by Father Frank Bonnike, a priest of the Rockford, Ill., diocese, said it was grateful to the two priests for "this extensive coverage—personally reaching 13,000 priests with our message—something our budget could not afford."

The NFPC statement denied that the convention in any way intended to "denigrate the spiritual aspects of the priestly ministry," holding that the NFPC

has always stressed that the priest has to be both social and cultic in his ministry. "We are interested in the total man," it said, "just as Jesus was."

The NFPC statement also denied that it was taking any concerted official action to oppose mandatory celibacy by endorsing a June 29 "job action" in support of the married clergy.

Stating that instead of a loss of membership, the federation has gained four members since the convention, the statement declared: "The NFPC is far more interested in getting on with the work of the Church than in haggling over the merits of voluntary organizations which have always had a place in the Church."

NEW BISHOP

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI has named Msgr. Jerome Razafindrazaka, the vicar general of the Archdiocese of Tananarive, Madagascar (Malagasy Republic), to be bishop of the Malagasy Diocese of Tamatave.

Thousands Against Abortion

Demonstrators await the start of a program in New York's Central Park after 10,000 people marched on Fifth Avenue to protest the two-year-old New York liberalized abortion law. The parade and rally, which included priests and nuns, doctors and nurses, was sponsored by the New York State Knights of Columbus after Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York declared April 16 "Right to Life Sunday." (RNS)

Women Ousted From Legislature After Protesting Abortion Law

Albany — (RNS) — A dozen or so young mothers, literally "fighting" for repeal of New York State's liberalized abortion law, were literally "thrown out" of the Assembly chambers after disrupting proceedings on a repeal measure.

Yelling "stop abortion!", some of the women were carried out of the Assembly after staging a brief sit-down near the Speaker's rostrum.

Mrs. Carol Joyce of Stony Brook, L.I., a member of one of several Right to Life groups formed to demonstrate at the state Capitol for restoration of the former anti-abortion law, told legislators, "We're not going to move until the Donovan-Crawford bill is let out of committee."

She referred to the bill that would replace the current liberal abortion law with the one repealed in 1970. It allows abortions up to the 24th week of pregnancy.

The demonstration in Albany followed by two days a massive parade and rally in New York City, sponsored by the State

Council of the Knights of Columbus, which also called for repeal of the present abortion law.

The Albany incident, which some legislators said hurt the chances of the new bill moving out of committee, was considered an indication of the growing intensity of the anti-abortion campaign throughout the state. Earlier, 600 persons gathered on the Capitol steps to protest the present law.

Among those ejected by the Capitol police was Mrs. Cathleen Boylan of Northport, L.I., who said, "I'm not sorry we did it. We felt we had to do something."

Although most of the abortion foes in the Assembly said they believed the legislators would vote to restore the old law if it were brought to the floor, the chances of the bill moving out of committee were considered slim.

Foster Child Buchwald Says Thanks in His Way

New York — (RNS) — Columnist Art Buchwald says the best way to become a humorist is first to become a foster child.

"After that it all comes naturally," the famous humorist told 400 leaders in government, social service and child welfare here.

He said that he decided to become a humorist when he was seven years old and a foster child.

"I turned everything into a joke," he reported. "Starting as the class clown, I graduated to making fun of all authority fig-

ures from the principal of the school to the social worker who visited every month."

"When a person is grown up and he attacks authority, society pays him large sums of money," he observed. "But when he's a kid and he makes fun of authority, they beat his brains out."

As a child, Mr. Buchwald was placed under the care of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum (HOA), though he said he lived in foster homes — 11 years — rather than in the institution itself.

"I never had anything to do

with the HOA kids, except in the summer when I was sent to HOA's Camp Wakitan in Bear Mountain," he said. "The kids who lived in the HOA didn't have too much use for those of us who came from foster homes, and so at camp my nose used to bleed a lot."

But he emphasized that he was not unhappy.

"The people I lived with were kind to me, and I had the benefit of a home life," he said. "I never lost touch with my father. And my three sisters and I are closer than many families who had

their homes from the start."

Buchwald spoke at a brunch at the Hotel Pierre here to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, one of the predecessor agencies of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York.

Buchwald said that as a foster child he dreamed that he would someday be the guest of honor at a major public affair like the brunch and receive a "standing ovation."

The audience rose and applauded heartily.