

Pope Calls for End to 'Murderous' Viet War

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, at the direct request of some 150 American youths studying in Rome, has called for a ceasefire in Vietnam and serious negotiations to end the "murderous and senseless destruction" there.

The Pope's appeal came in reply to a letter from students attending the Rome Center of Loyola University of Chicago.

The 74-year-old pontiff, appearing fatigued from a long week of public appearances that included a May Day address, called for "rapid, sincere and effective" negotiations to end the Vietnam war.

"We express the hope that on both sides the operations of war will come to an end, that noble and generous proposals for rapid, sincere and effective negotiations for a ceasefire and for peace will prevail over every other interest and that, in this way, an honorable and peaceful solution be made possible," he said.

The papal pronouncement came in response to an appeal for such a statement made by the American students some days ago through the Vatican Secretariat of State.

The students in their appeal asked the spiritual leader of the world's more than 600 million Catholics to restate his "nu-

merous pleas for peace," deploring what they termed the "unfortunate and costly escalation in seemingly endless violence of the war in southeast Asia.

Pope Paul said that he would be shirking his duties and obligations if he did not make a strong appeal for peace at this time.

"As the representative of Christ, Teacher and King of peace," he said, "we are obliged to deplore every war, its causes, its inhuman violence and its murderous and senseless destruction."

"We know that these young students, sharing the same ideals as many of their fellow

students in the United States and in the rest of the world, are now suffering because of the aggravation of the war in Vietnam in which their country is involved," he said.

It was one of the most direct speeches on the southeast Asian conflict that the Pope has made in several months and only the second reference he has made to the conflict by name since the peace talks began in Paris.

"We wish to put ourselves close to all those, whether civilian or military, who have been suffering from this conflict for such a long time in that distant and dear country we esteem and love so much," the Pope said.

The pontiff met with the American students following a general audience at which he in that address had spoken on peace. He said he would never give up his attempts to dissuade nations from warring.

The speech directed at an American audience and in the English language and with references to American participation in the war was unusual for the normally diplomatic pontiff.

"I don't recall him having spoken so directly about the need for some action to end the war or

using such harsh terms to describe its consequences," said one Vatican aide. "He showed a great deal of emotion in making the speech, too."

Vatican, Sudan Agree on Diplomatic Ties

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican announced that it has reached agreement with the Sudan to establish full diplomatic relations.

This accord will end several years of tension involving the Vatican and Sudanese Roman Catholic authorities and the Khartoum government over activities of Catholic missionaries in the southern region of Sudan.

The black population of that region, mainly animists with a sizeable Christian minority, had long been in conflict with the Muslim north. In March, the Khartoum government announced it had reached an agreement with the southern rebels and the fighting was over.

A settlement formula, granting regional autonomy to the three provinces of southern Sudan, was worked out in talks at Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, and was formally endorsed in an agreement signed March 27.

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and the World Council of Churches have been credited with promoting the atmosphere for the talks.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Khartoum and the Vatican was said to have been the direct result of a visit to Pope Paul by the Sudanese foreign minister, Mansour Khalid, last November.

Bishops Reiterate Abortion Stand

Brooklyn — The Roman Catholic Bishops of New York state meeting in plenary session Friday, May 5, unanimously reasserted their support for the Donovan-Crawford (abortion-on-demand repeal) bill currently being considered for a vote by the State Legislature. They also firmly stated their unalterable opposition to any compromise legislation harmful to the rights of unborn children.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

A "Marriage Encounter Mass of Renewal" will be held at the Church of the Annunciation, Norton and Goodman streets, Sunday, May 14, at 3 p.m. Couples who have made the marriage encounter before are invited to bring their families. There will be a social hour immediately following the Mass. For further information, call the Spiritual Committee at 436-1847.

Atheistic Communism Draws Papal Warning

Vatican — (RNS) — Pope Paul took the opportunity of a May Day message to warn workers and poor people against placing their futures and trust in the hands of atheistic Communists rather than the Church.

The pontiff complained that there is a "widespread" belief among workers in many parts of the world that the Catholic Church "has no sympathy for the working people."

He contended that a check of the facts will show that this claim is not true and is fostered by Communist governments and other enemies of the Church.

"It is said that the Church does not know the workers," the Pope said during a special general audience on the occasion of the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. "It is said that it supports the rich and the powerful."

"It is said that the Church is conservative, that it preaches the duties of the weak and the rights of the strong."

Describing these beliefs as erroneous, the Pope blamed their spread to a great extent on Communist atheism which, he said,

turns this propaganda against the Church into "opposition, hatred." He said the workers and the poor have a great friend in the Church.

"The countries where atheism prevails and has become programmed know all this well," the Pope added. "I could say some bitter things about this... atheism is oppressive and destructive to the spiritual life of the workers."

The Pope said that when the facts prove to the contrary, the enemies of the Church raise other doubts about the attitude of the Church toward the workers and others.

"Whether he knows it or not, the worker has the affection of the Church of Christ," the Pope maintained. This, he said, is in direct contradiction to claims in some quarters that the Church "fears the working people."

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