



Pleas for Vietnam Cease-Fire

Pope Paul VI acknowledges cheers from a group of pilgrims during his weekly general audience at the Vatican. In a speech following the audience, the pontiff called for a cease-fire in Vietnam and serious negotiations to end the "murderous and senseless destruction" there. The Pope's appeal came in reply to a letter from some 150 American students attending the Rome Center of Loyola University of Chicago. (RNS)

Vatican Journalist Sees U.S. Church as Shaken

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Roman Catholic Church in the United States is being shaken to its roots by "a tremendous earthquake," according to an article in L'Osservatore della Domenica, the Vatican City weekly.

The article, written by Battista Mondinn, a lay Italian theologian, said that evidence of the "chaos" in the Church in the U.S. can be found daily in media accounts of church news.

Asserting that U.S. Church presents a "frightening and distressing" picture of "defections and turmoil" among the clergy and religious and laity, Mondinn declared: "A tremendous earthquake is shaking the Church in the United States to its roots."

He said that "almost every day" newspapers and magazines "give us news of some fresh disaster — priests who abandon their ministries to take wives, nuns who abandon their convents, parish schools which close their doors for lack of teachers and money."

"It is a frightening and distressing picture which no one would ever have imagined six or seven years ago," he added.

The writer complained that too often, in Catholic publications, reports of defections and accounts of turmoil are given almost "with an air of triumph." In the U.S., Mondinn said, there flourishes "a new religious literature, in which, with masochistic fury — hardly known not only in the history of the Church, but in any other society — American Catholic authors are flogging their Church to death."

However, despite doctrinal aberrations and defections and acts of treason, the writer said he felt that "there is still a silent majority which has remained faithful to the basic obligations of Christianity and which continues to live an admirable Christian life of prayer, sacrifice, obedience and patience."

"We therefore have good reasons to believe that the silent majority will guarantee the sur-

vival of the Catholic Church in the United States," he said.

In his attack on religious journalism, Mondinn said that "instead of tending to the bleeding wounds of their Church, writers willingly lend themselves to those journalistic fabrications which are typical of our time, especially when the victim is the Catholic Church."

He said that tributes to Father Hans Kung, the controversial Swiss theologian, who has questioned the doctrine of papal infallibility, have been greater in America than anywhere else. He said Father Kung was being praised in the U.S. "thanks to his acid criticism" of the Church. Many Catholic authors, he said, "following Kung's example, have launched a wave of criticism "often more grave and more offensive than any Protestant authors would dare to make."

Papal Aide Cites Value of Media

Vatican City — (RNS) — Archbishop Edward L. Heston, president of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, said the Church's observance of World Communications Day was designed to remind Catholics of their duty to support and promote mass communications media "that exist to uphold and defend the truth and make Christian values prevail in society."

In a statement over Vatican Radio, the archbishop said the question the individual believer must put to himself is, "What support can I give this effort? How can I hope to promote, how can I hope to spread, the truth throughout the mass media?"

"It is absolutely true," he affirmed, "that getting Christ's truth to all men is a matter of life and death."

The truth, Archbishop Heston added, which is essentially "the Christian message," the "good news," that Christians have to tell the world, is the truth enunciated by Jesus when He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me."

Pope Paul Warns Of World War Possibilities

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul has issued a chilling warning about the possibility of a third world war if the major powers continue to tantalize each other with raw tests of strength.

The pontiff spoke of such trouble spots as Southeast Asia and the Middle East, and called on all parties in the Vietnam war to return to negotiations toward peace.

Although he refrained from mentioning any major power by name it was evident to some Vatican officials that the pontiff's remarks concerned the recent developments in Vietnam where the United States sealed off sea access to the North by mining harbors.

The pontiff's message to people in St. Peter's Square on the Feast of the Ascension was given in particularly gloomy wording, and the Pope's voice rang with emotion.

He declared that any antagonistic action on the part of a major power could set off a highly explosive and deadly situation.

"We must try to avoid at all costs any extreme test of strength and any definite breaking of rea-

sonable negotiations," the Pope said, adding:

"These are days of trepidation. Rumors of uncertainty and danger are heard everywhere. Some places are full of menace, especially the Near and Far East."

"The situation seems to assume a character of extreme gravity for the peace of the world."

Pope Paul issued a stern warning to the world leaders not to cause a further escalation of trouble by trying to build up their prestige.

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