

Papal Primacy Seen 'No Barrier' To Catholic WCC Membership

Geneva (RNS) — The concept of papal primacy poses no "barrier" to Roman Catholic membership in the World Council of Churches but does raise "practical difficulties," according to a Vatican-WCC report released here and in Rome.

The document, prepared by a Joint Working Group, does not anticipate early Vatican application for WCC membership. It does, however, expect more intensive and widespread discussion of the issue and lists several priority considerations, including papal primacy.

"Would Roman Catholic membership create the impression among the Roman Catholic faithful (and perhaps among others) that the Pope has abandoned something of his authority?" the report asks. "Or on the other hand, would the exercise of the papal ministry in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches create the impression that the Pope was speaking and acting on behalf of the World Council and its member Churches?"

The report of the Working Group, set up in 1965, gives a negative answer to both questions. It says that membership

would not alter the internal structure of Catholicism, would not make the Pope, unless requested, a spokesman for the council, currently made up of 255 Protestant and Orthodox Churches.

Published in the July issue of Ecumenical Review, a WCC quarterly, the 38-page report reflects several years of study and dialogue on Catholic membership in the Council. It echoes a statement from a recent meeting of the Joint Group, to the effect that the Vatican does not intend to apply for membership in the near future, but wishes to intensify interaction with the WCC.

In addition to papal primacy, another problem is representation. As a member, the Catholic Church would be far larger than all of the present member Churches combined. Would this mean that it would dominate the voting in membership meetings and staff positions?

The Joint Group again answered "no." If a member, the Catholic "representation should not be so large that other Churches

would no longer be genuine partners in dialogue and fellowship," the report states.

"This consideration already plays an important part in the WCC. Large Churches are not represented in exact proportion to their size; small Churches have a larger representation than their numerical strength would warrant. The Roman Catholic Church has also recognized this principle in its ecumenical activities."

Entitled "Patterns of Relationship Between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches," the report has a preface signed by both Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, WCC general secretary, and Cardinal Jan Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity. The two ecumenical leaders say the document is aimed at stimulating discussion and "deeper probing" into the whole question of Catholic-WCC relations.



Cardinal Cooke and Bishop Mahoney

Pope Names Auxiliary For N.Y. Diocese

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Pope Paul has appointed Father John J. Sullivan of Tulsa, Okla., to succeed Bishop John L. Paschang as Bishop of Grand Island, Neb.

Bishop Paschang, 76, resigned for reasons of health after holding the post for 21 years.

The Pope has also appointed Msgr. James P. Mahoney, vicar general of the Archdiocese of New York, to serve as auxiliary bishop to Cardinal Terence Cooke.

Bishop-designate Sullivan was born July 5, 1920, in Hortorn, Kan. He attended elementary and high schools in Oklahoma

City, studied at St. Benedict's College in Atchison, Kan., and prepared for the priesthood at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis.

He was ordained in Oklahoma City in 1944 and later held pastoral assignments in Guthrie, Okla., Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Bishop-designate Mahoney, who will be titular Bishop of Ipagro, was born Aug. 16, 1925, in Kingston, N.Y. He attended St. Jerome and Blessed Sacrament schools in the Bronx, Sacred College in New York City and St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, N.Y. After ordination in 1951 by the late Cardinal Francis Spellman, he studied psychology at St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y.

Court Kills Maintenance Aid

Private Schools Lose

New York (RNS) — A panel of three federal judges ruled here that aid for maintenance and repair of non-public schools provided under a state law is unconstitutional, but reserved decision on two other provisions of the aid measure.

Up to \$4 million would have been available for non-public schools for maintenance and repair under a law signed by Gov. Rockefeller in May.

Other provisions would provide between \$5 million and \$25 million in tuition aid to low-income families having children in non-public schools, and \$10 million to \$15 million in income tax benefits to families whose income is less than \$25,000 annually.

All three provisions were challenged in a suit by the Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL), a coalition of 33 religious, labor, civic and other organizations.

PEARL has previously brought successful suits against a 1970 Mandated Services Act that would have provided \$28 million annually to non-public schools for record-keeping costs and a 1971 law that allocated \$33 million for secular educational services.

The ruling against the \$4 million allocation for maintenance and repair came in a three-paragraph decision by Circuit Court Judge Paul R. Hays, District Judge John M. Cannella and District Judge Murray I. Gurfein.

"We are reserving decision on the other matters in suit," they said, "since they are not as urgent and since the court requires more time for decision."

Msgr. Joseph T. O'Keefe, education secretary for the Catholic Archdiocese of New York, criticized the decision as one that was detrimental to the well-being of poor children.

"The court, it seems to me, is not in tune with the needs of inner-city communities," he said. "It is letting a rigid, doctrinaire

position militate against the well-being of people."

He deplored those who he said were making a "career fighting this type of legislation" and charged that it was a case of "the affluent fighting the poor."

Some of those leading the fight, he said, register their own children in expensive private schools but do not want poor parents to have this same choice.

Msgr. O'Keefe expressed some optimism that the court's decision might be reversed on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mandated Services Bid Loses

Albany — The U.S. Supreme Court must now decide before any aid goes to nonpublic school students under the two-year-old State Mandated Services law, it was determined last week.

An appeal for final payment of the second half funds due for the 1971-1972 school year was denied by Supreme Court Justice Harold Blackmun.

Acting on an appeal by the attorney general of New York, the Supreme Court justice upheld the stay issued by the three-judge federal court in New York.

The New York court, in a split decision, determined that aid could not be paid, although it was due on or before June 15. The court in a 2-1 decision determined that the law was in violation of the constitution and therefore stopped all payments. This despite the fact that payments had been made for previous services and the schools were depending on the payments this year and had, in fact, performed the services which were required.

Justice Blackmun, however, determined that despite services rendered, payment could not be made in his upholding of the injunction granted by the lower court.

He was also hopeful that aid might come from the federal level.

Father Franklin E. Fitzpatrick, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn, also emphasized that the court decision "strikes directly at the poor" since the law had been drawn to aid schools having high concentrations of disadvantaged children.

He said about 57 schools in his diocese would have received aid under the law. In the Archdiocese of New York, the number would have been about 80, according to Msgr. O'Keefe.

None of the money can now come unless the U.S. Supreme Court hears the Mandated Services Appeal (an appeal now being prepared), and decides to reverse the lower court decision.

CDA to Support Right to Life

Atlantic City, N.J. (RNS) — The 34th biennial national convention of the Catholic Daughters of America here adopted a statement of principles declaring it would participate in right-to-life organizations and support laws to safeguard the unborn from abortion.

The delegates declared that they would work to repeal laws that allow abortion on demand. They said the "United Nations Declaration on the rights of the child recognized that the being before birth is a 'child' and that the child, as defined, needs legal protection."

FR. LOUIS HOHMAN

The Open Window



Question: The world is confronted by a population explosion with consequences beyond human comprehension. It was precipitated no doubt, by modern medicine with the unqualified blessing of the Church. The Christian concepts of chastity and continence have been for a large part rejected.

Unless an acceptable solution is soon found and applied, one can only conclude that the heinous practice of abortion will expand to be universally adopted — and legalized.

The ethical solution, of course, is an acceptable alternative — preventive. Eunuchs are frequently mentioned in both Testaments of the Bible but not once with dishonor: often with commendation. Matthew (19:12) quotes Our Divine Lord in this regard: "... and there are eunuchs who have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

Hence my question: Why does the Church not accept voluntary vasectomy on its own recognition? How long will she preclude a good alternative to the wholesale slaughter of innocence?

Answer — You really have asked a bushel of questions. At the risk of rambling let me take some pot shots. When you say the problem stems from modern medicine with the unqualified blessing of the Church, do I detect a note of complaint? I think you will agree that knowledge, truth must be sought even when their possession creates new problems.

You are right in saying that an acceptable alternative to abortion must be available. But those who believe that abortion is acceptable have already found their answer to the population explosion. So you are talking about an alternative for Christians. And that makes your statement that "the concepts of chastity and continence have been for a large part rejected" a bit odd because by definition a true Christian has not rejected these concepts.

An observation on the bit about eunuchs: I don't know where you got the idea that eunuchs (the castrated) are commended in Scripture. For the Jews, it was a fate worse than death. Jesus is using this precise knowledge to make his point. He is saying, "You may think that to deny the possibility of fatherhood is a terrible thing, but it is a beautiful thing if it is done for the benefit of the reign of God."

What you are asking simply is: why is not vasectomy a legitimate alternative to abortion and/or the population explosion? The traditional stand on vasectomy is — No, it is a kind of mutilation. But there are reputable theologians who see vasectomy as a form of birth control, albeit permanent. And after all mutilation is OK when there is sufficient reason. To follow these theologians, one must subscribe to the idea that the birth control question is not totally a closed question, that if one has a sufficient reason (and it must be greater in this case because of the permanence) a vasectomy would be all right as an alternative. But there still is the Pope's encyclical being reckoned with, as well as the traditional teaching about vasectomy. So we're right back to the old controversy about the place of conscience in this matter. I guess I'll have to leave that one for somebody else to sort out.