

Increased Cooperation Seen Between Vatican, WCC

Vatican City — (RNS) — A Vatican observer at the recent meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches said reports given at the sessions showed great hope for a continuation and stepping up of cooperative efforts between the WCC and the Catholic Church on all levels.

"But this does not mean that Catholic membership in the World Council is coming soon," said Father Basil Meeking, a member of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

"It was made clear that an application for Catholic membership in the WCC would not be coming in the near future," he said.

"I would say that aside from the mention of the membership matter, the atmosphere was a very positive one when it came to the Catholic Church and the World Council," the priest noted.

Father Meeking, a New Zealander and Father John Long, an American Jesuit member of the secretariat, attended the

meeting in Utrecht, as invited observers. Cardinal Jan Willebrands, head of the secretariat and a native of Holland, attended one session and gave an address. He was accompanied by Cardinal Bernard Alfrink, Primate of the Netherlands, who also spoke informally to the WCC Central Committee.

Father Meeking said, "there was a good bit of mention of the collaboration now under way on the local levels between council people and Catholics. And there was mention of the collaboration going on between the WCC and the Catholic Church at the international level."

"The reports and statements made strongly indicated that these collaborations will hopefully be increased and certainly will be continued at all levels," Father Meeking said.

"While I would have to say the developments at the meeting so far as the Catholic Church are concerned might not have been exactly exciting, they were quite hopeful and very encouraging," he added.

He said the matter of Catholic full membership in the WCC is under study in the Vatican.

Like other ecumenists, Father Meeking indicated that the membership of the Catholic Church in the world organization is not as important now as the continuation and building up of collaboration that already exists between the Church and the WCC at all levels.



Pope Receives Sudan Ambassador

Pope Paul VI walks with the first Sudanese Ambassador to the Vatican, Sayed Khala El-Osman Hashim, after accepting his credentials at Castelgandolfo, the papal Summer residence. Citing the recent agreement which ended 17 years of internal strife in the Sudan between the Muslims of the North and the Christian and other rebels of the South, the Pope said he felt the establishment of diplomatic relations "will benefit the Christian community and that it will further the dialogue that is happily being carried out between Christians and Muslims." (RNS)

Dismissed Bishop Says He Was Too 'Liberal'

Rome (RNS) — Roman Catholic Bishop Julio Gonzales Ruiz of Puno, Peru, has charged that he was forced by the Vatican to resign his see earlier this year because of his "liberal policies." He said he was "condemned without trial and without previous notification."

The 49-year-old prelate, considered by his supporters to be the most progressive bishop in Peru, leveled his charges in an interview with the Catholic review, "Com." The social action journal, labeled by its critics as "radical," is published in Rome by Benedictine Abbot Giovanni Franzoni of St. Paul's Outside-the-Walls.

Bishop Gonzales was received in private audience by Pope Paul VI early last July. Later in the month the Vatican announced that the Pope had accepted the bishop's resignation.

The Peruvian prelate reportedly was under investigation during six of his seven years as bishop. A member of the Salesians of St. John Bosco (Society of St. Francis de Sales), he was consecrated bishop in 1959 at the age of 36, thus becoming one of the youngest Catholic bishops appointed in recent history.

A Puno diocesan assembly has asked that instigators of charges against Bishop Gonzales be named and a listing of the charges be made public. Several priests of the diocese have alleged that five Peruvian archbishops unjustly instigated the prelate's removal.

In his interview with "Com" (short for "Community"), Bishop Gonzales said that in Puno he had tried to bear witness to the Christian life through sacraments and prayer "and also by organizing cooperatives, literacy campaigns, elementary education programs, irrigation projects, and agricultural development."

He said the "conservative" clergy of Peru were guilty of "racial discrimination" against Peruvian Indians, and that Peruvian bishops had never visited his Puno diocese "to see for themselves the work we were doing."

The bishops, he added, "have condemned my pastoral and social work... without ever having seen it, without ever having spoken to the people of Puno, without ever having asked the people if they were happy with their bishop or not."



Cardinal Dies

Cardinal Angelo Dell'Acqua, the vicar general of Rome, died in Lourdes Aug. 27 during a pilgrimage. The 68-year-old prelate was stricken with a heart attack as he took part in a torchlight procession in front of the Rosaire Basilica and died soon afterward in a nearby dispensary. As vicar general, Cardinal Dell'Acqua was administrator of the Rome diocese in the name of the Pope, who is Bishop of Rome. His death reduces the number of cardinals to 116 from a high of 134 in 1969. (RNS)

Pre-School Group Slates Workshop

The Rochester Diocese Pre-School Association is sponsoring a training course workshop for new and experienced pre-school teachers at Guardian Angels School, Henrietta, on Thursday evenings, Sept. 14-Oct. 19, at 8 p.m.

The course will cover preparation of curricula and lesson plans; the use of filmstrips, demonstrations of materials and supplies, music and relief techniques, the use of the Come to the Father series, and children's liturgies.

Mrs. Theresa Beckman is president of the group, and has invited teachers of all denominations to attend.

New World Council Head Congratulated by Pope

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul has sent a message of congratulations to Dr. Philip A. Potter, the newly elected general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

The telegram, signed by Cardinal Jean Villot, the Vatican secretary of state, quoted the pontiff as saying Dr. Potter has

been chosen for an "important and ecumenical post."

A message was also sent to Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, retiring head of the WCC, which has 255 Protestant and Orthodox member Churches. Dr. Blake was thanked for his spirit of collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church.

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