



Auxiliary Bishop William McManus of Chicago (left), chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference's education committee, confers with Auxiliary Bishop Raymond Lucker of St. Paul-Minneapolis during the semi-annual meeting to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington. (RNS)

U.S. Bishops Stress Traditional Role of Education

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — The U.S. Catholic bishops in a major pastoral statement here reaffirmed the traditional mission of Christian education and urged all Catholics to "maintain and strengthen" its purposes — to teach doctrine, build community and serve.

Warning that the Catholic school system is "shrinking" and undergoing a financial crisis, the 28-page pastoral, "To Teach as Jesus Did," called for a series of specific steps for action and a "renewal" of purpose and organization.

The statement, in preparation for over a year under the auspices of the education committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference, was approved by a vote of 197 to 29, with four absentions by the membership of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The USCC and the NCCB met here Nov. 13-17.

Auxiliary Bishop William McManus of Chicago said during a press conference that the pastoral is unprecedented in that it is the first to reflect sentiments from the whole Catholic community. Many levels of the Church were involved in the study that led to the draft presented to the bishops.

Stressing the need for "many different educational programs and institutions," the pastoral pointed out that planning and implementation "must involve the entire Catholic community... particularly Catholic parents."

The statement urged cooperation and collaboration among priests, religious, lay teachers and administrators as "full partners in the Catholic educational enterprise."

Noting an "American imperative" for educational freedom and diversity, the statement said, "The right of parents to exercise genuine freedom of choice in education in ways consistent with the principles of justice and equality must be recognized and made operative."

In this connection, the pastoral called for "special attention" to those who suffer from "educational disadvantages."

In an overt plea for govern-

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Bishops Urge End to War

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Echoing their 1971 call for an end to the Vietnam war with "no further delay," the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States also made a special plea for "generosity" in reconciling sincere conscientious objectors and in rebuilding strife-torn Southeast Asia.

The prelates passed a resolution by a vote of 186 to 4 which, in effect, condemned both sides in the war for "bombing and terrorism which are causing such a loss of civilian life and the destruction of the land itself" in Vietnam.

"Indeed," they said, "a particularly anguishing and in many cases immoral aspect of this war has been the suffering and death inflicted upon non-combatants."

The statement read by Cardinal John Dearden of Detroit, was the second draft of a resolution and again caused a lengthy and spirited debate during which the phrase, "War is no longer admissible as a means of settling disputes," was voted out of the document.

A milder substitution, which also included a prerogative for self-defense and limited war, was approved by a bishops' ballot of 138 to 60. The motion was made by Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle of Washington on a recommendation by Abbot Edmund McCaffrey, OSV, of Belmont Abbey, N.C.

Cardinal O'Boyle charged that the statement rejected was "unfair to those who died in all our wars" and he said it indicated that "We will not stand up and defend our nation when necessary."

The bishops' resolution, which was described by Cardinal Dearden as a "thrust to the future," observed that "final details of a settlement" of the war are being refined and it called for prayer "to Christ, the Prince of Peace, for a successful outcome of present negotiations: that is, for a just and lasting peace with stability and freedom for all the nations and peoples of Southeast Asia."

Major Action By Bishops

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Major developments at the U.S. Catholic Bishops' conference:

- The first pastoral since 1968, a wide-ranging document on education that was prepared after consultation with the laity.

- A statement on "the imperatives of peace," which called for an end to the war in Vietnam, reconciliation of conscientious objectors, and the reconstruction of Southeast Asia, and warned of "grave moral problems" connected with the war.

- Establishment of a Standing Committee on the Priesthood and a permanent national office to service it.

- A request to the Vatican for three special norms to help American diocesan marriage courts expedite annulment cases.

- Approval of a projected pastoral letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

- A statement on rural poverty urging increased attention by Church and society to the problems of the rural poor.

CYO FUN DAY

The traditional Thanksgiving weekend "fun day" at the CYO is scheduled for 9 a.m. until noon Saturday, Nov. 25. There will be roller skating, water games and special activities for school-age members and their guests. Tickets are on sale at 50 Chestnut.

"... we believe the imperatives of peace now demand intensive study of many complex and pressing and moral issues," the bishops declared. They added that "the experience of recent years amply illustrates the fact that grave ethical and moral questions regarding warfare remain unsolved." They said further in the debated statement:

"While recognizing the right of self-defense, we are nevertheless convinced that war is not an apt means of settling disputes" and "we regard as an urgent priority the quest for viable means of preventing war and for effective alternative methods of resolving conflicts — through such agencies as the United Nations ..."

The NCCB resolution specifically called on the U.S. Catholic Conference, Catholic educational institutions, and diocesan offices for justice and peace to "take a leading role in the effort to work for international justice and find ways to ensure that

peace — which, God willing, is returning to Southeast Asia and also to the U.S. — will be the permanent condition of human life in all nations and for all time."

The bishops' resolution urged that Americans "now turn their attention to the task of reconciliation not only in Southeast Asia but also in our country. This war can well leave a residue of bitterness which could poison our national life for years to come," the statement warned.

The resolution urged special attention to the young people affected by the war, returning veterans, war prisoners and those wounded in conflict. It also urged "sincere compassion" for the families of those killed, maimed or missing in action.

"In the spirit of reconciliation," the resolution stressed, "all possible consideration must be given to those young men who, because of sincere conscientious belief, refused to participate in the war."

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