



**'Children, Harken Unto Me'**

Pope Paul VI holds a child on his lap as he is carried on his portable throne to his weekly general audience at the Vatican. (RNS)

## Vatican Aid Explains Annulment Fees

Vatican City (RNS) — New Vatican norms limiting legal fees in ecclesiastical marriage tribunals were adopted "to try to meet widespread pastoral needs in all parts of the world," according to Cardinal Dino Staffa, prefect of the Apostolic Signature, the "supreme court" of the Catholic Church.

This Vatican agency has jurisdiction in cases involving personnel and decisions of the Sacred Rota, the Church's supreme marriage tribunal.

Cardinal Staffa said the new regulations, which became effective Nov. 1, resulted from demands made during Vatican II and during the first Synod of Bishops in 1967 that the schedule of court costs and legal fees be revised "to give equal rights to rich and poor alike."

In the past, as critics have pointed out, a Roman Catholic couple seeking a marriage annulment has had to follow a tortuous and expensive avenue, often leading from local hearings all the way up to the Sacred Rota.

In recent years, Pope Paul VI has streamlined the process, allowing more decisions on the local level and eliminating legal delays, but tribunal costs remained high. Rota costs, sometimes running into thousands of dollars, made annulments available largely to the prosperous.

Under the new directives, as they pertain to Rota trials, lawyers' fees may range from \$255

### POPE'S CHRISTMAS

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI will celebrate Christmas Eve midnight Mass at a railway construction site 25 miles north of Rome. The Vatican said the pontiff will offer the traditional 12 p.m. Mass for workers and their families at a site where workers are temporarily housed. They are engaged in construction of a new rail line from Rome to Florence.

Thanksgiving must be coming pretty soon: the Christmas catalogues have already arrived. Along about this time next month our attentions will be directed to the Easter fashions. Pollster Louis Harris will by that time probably have issued his second rundown on the Ted Agnew-Ted Kennedy presidential race of 1976. The first poll, already taken, shows that Kennedy will win by 51 per cent to 43. Harris has not yet decided at what time on that fateful Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning, four years from now Agnew will concede.

We tend to rush things . . .

There are some nice little bargains to be snapped up before the Christmas Eve rush-hour in New York, if you act right now. Tiffany has a fast-moving diamond brooch at \$650,000 and, if pressed, FAO Schwarz will find you a baby panda to go with the stuffed 8-foot giraffe you bought there last Christmas. A real baby panda, of course, not something you wind up. With Washington and Peking on such good terms, you should be able to import one for a million or two.

The Man Who Has Everything will flip if you surprise him with a nice little item from the Hamacher-Schlemmer Christmas Gift catalogue. It is a Hippo Boat: "Gay violet with pink and black trim. Perfect for the lake or pond. Steering wheel, electric accelerator and rudder. Rechargeable battery. Six ft. long, 32 in. wide. \$950." Or maybe he'd prefer the Swan Boat at \$1,195.

Or the \$1,895 Horseless Carriage . . . "exact replica of the 1901 Olds." (The 1901 Olds, regular size, cost maybe \$189.50.) Or the Mini Bowling Alley, a steal at \$1,850.

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