

Pa. Bishops Plan Drive On Abortion

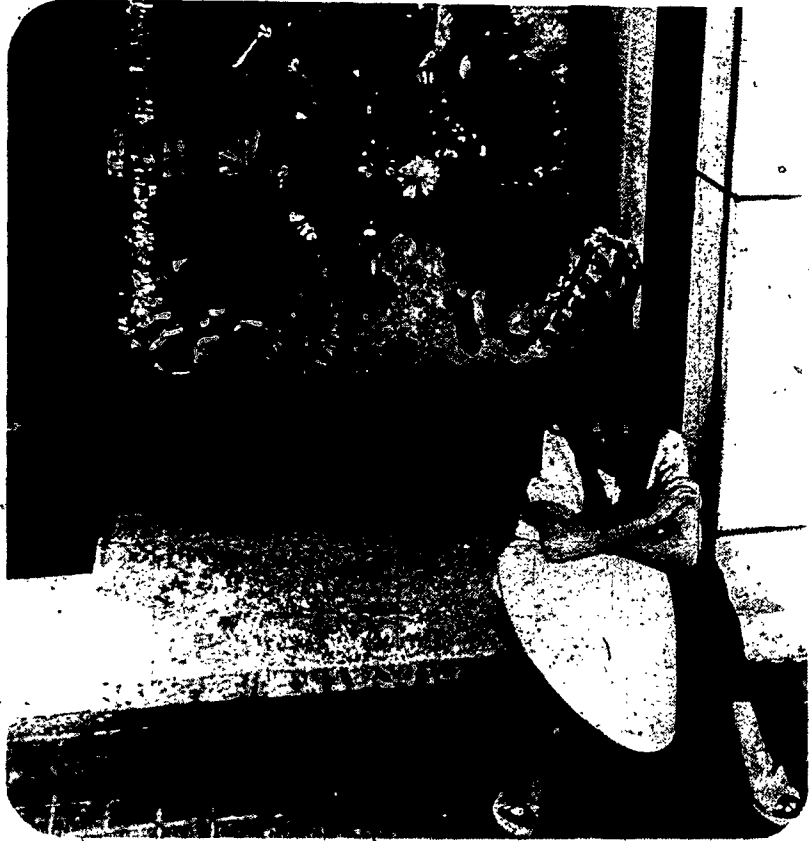
Harrisburg, Pa. (RNS) — Roman Catholic Bishops in Pennsylvania will try again next year to secure a strict abortion law, the Catholic Conference announced following a gubernatorial veto of a legislative proposal to permit abortions only when the life of the woman is threatened by a pregnancy.

The Catholic Conference, which represents the bishops on legislative matters, said Gov. Shapp's veto of the bill "consigns thousands of unborn children to death in Pennsylvania hospitals."

An effort to override the veto failed in the House of Repre-

sentatives and Rep. Martin P. Mullen (D.-Philadelphia), an advocate for strict abortion laws, said he would run for governor in 1974 when Gov. Shapp is expected to seek a second term.

In rejecting the bill, Gov. Shapp said "it is unsound" and "so restrictive that it is unenforceable" and "potentially casts aside the rights of every woman in this Commonwealth."



Saigon Christmas

A little beggar girl sits on a curb in front of a Saigon shop window displaying a Christmas tree and presents. Even in the midst of war, the South Vietnamese people are preparing for the coming of the yuletide season. (RNS)

Cardinal to Visit Troops but Not in Vietnam

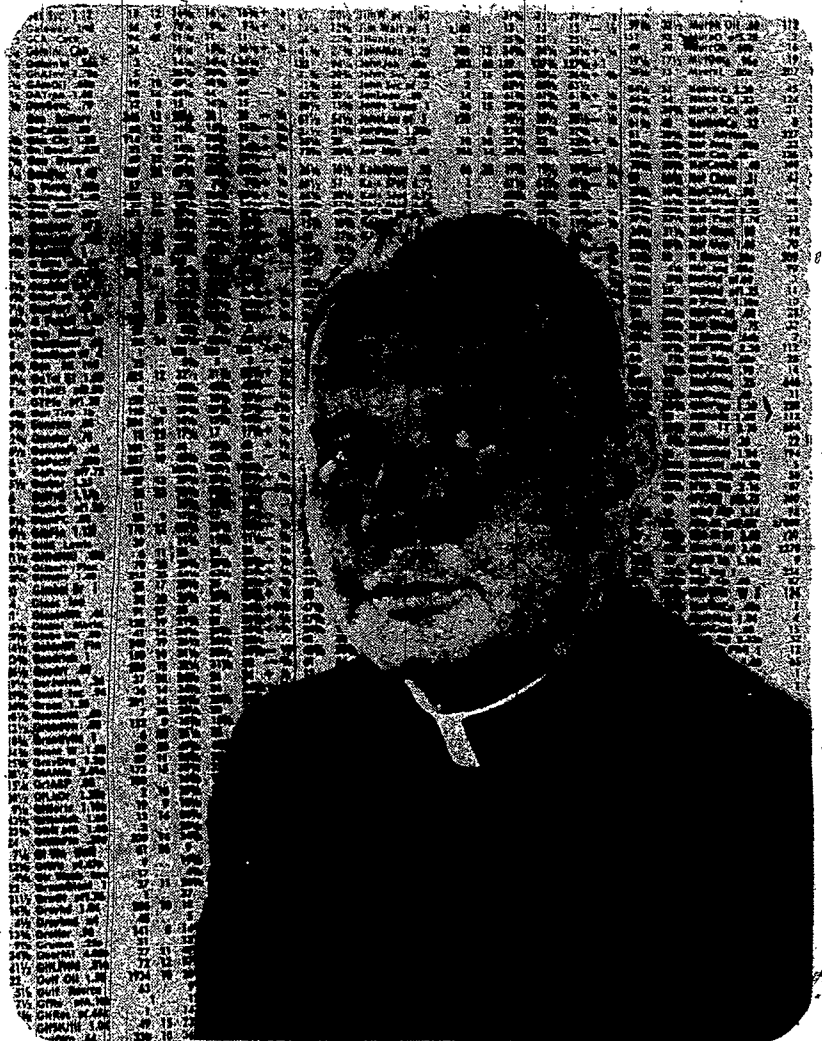
New York (RNS) — For the fifth straight year, New York's Cardinal Terence Cooke will continue the tradition established by the late Cardinal Spellman and visit members of the U.S. Armed Forces abroad on Christmas Day.

However, this year's trip omits Southeast Asia.

The cardinal, military vicar for Catholics in the nation's armed services, will celebrate Midnight Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, and later that day offer Mass at the U.S. air base at Goose Bay, Labrador.

From Goose Bay, he will fly to Sondrestromfjord and Thule in Greenland, to Keflavik in Iceland, to Frankfurt in Germany, to Torrejon and Rota in Spain for pastoral visits with servicemen and their families.

On the return swing, he will stop at the naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba, on New Year's Day, as well as Navy and Air Force installations at Key West and Homestead, Fla.



Wall Street Poet

That I can't take it with me
Is not what makes me glum;
It's more the fact, I've not a bit
Of IT
To be taken from.

For several years the light verse of one J. F. Fenlon has been appearing in the financial monthly, Wall Street Reports. During that time there was no clue that the author was actually a pastor, a superior of a religious house, a former vicar general of the Paulist Fathers, as well as a well-known missionary and writer under his own name. Now, with the publication of a slim volume of Wall Street-oriented poetry entitled Songs for Stockwatchers, it has been revealed that the author is in real life Paulist Father James F. Finley. A native of Jersey City, N.J., Father Finley is no stranger to the field of finance. When he was vicar general of the Paulist Fathers he was part of the general council responsible for administering the property and investments of the order. (RNS)

What Disestablishing Irish Church Means

Irish poet William Butler Yeats, back in 1925, told his fellow countrymen that if they ever expected to be reunited with the north of Ireland they had better "convince the Ulster Protestants that if they join themselves to us, they will not suffer injustice."

A News Analysis

"They can be won," he said, "not now, but in a generation; but they cannot be won if you insist that the (Roman) Catholic conscience alone must dominate the public life of Ireland."

Nearly two generations later, the "Catholic conscience" is still seen as a dominant force in Irish public life.

To many, if not most, of Ulster's one million Protestants, Ireland, with its 94.8 per cent Roman Catholic population, is, in fact, "priest-ridden," and its Constitution, "theocratic."

"The theocracy charge is an oversimplification," says Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, a prominent member of the Labor opposition in the Dail (lower house of Irish Parliament), "but it has a core of truth."

Certainly, he points out, the Republic — with its constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, its Protestants who have held high office, its tradition that priests do not seek political posts — is not a one-faith theocracy in the strictest sense.

But there is some justice to Protestant charges, he agrees, that Irish parliamentarians have displayed a consistent readiness

to bow to the wishes of Eire's four Catholic archbishops and 24 bishops.

Over the years, Protestants have also called attention to sections of Eire's 1937 Constitution, which, they contended, were still further evidence of Catholic Church domination in the Irish Republic.

Of these sections, there is one that Protestants have said they found particularly objectionable — Article 44, sub-section 2 — which declares:

"The state recognizes the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens."

On Dec. 7, 1972, in a national referendum, Irish Republic voters were invited to "vote yes for a new Ireland," by scrapping this section.

And scrap it they did. Some 50 per cent of the 1.8 million eligible voters turned out, with 85 per cent voting for deletion of Article 44 of the Constitution.

The government of Prime Minister John Lynch, the two opposition parties — Fine Gael and Labor — and most of the Catholic Church hierarchy, led by Cardinal William Conway, Primate of All Ireland, had all favored abrogation of the "special position" clause.

Many months ago, the cardinal said he "would not shed a tear" if the clause were repealed. Its removal, he said, might be useful in dealings with "our fellow Christians in the North."

To be sure, there was some, be-

lated, vocal opposition to the proposed amendment, before the referendum vote, on the part of the segments of the Catholic Church.

Bishop Cornelius, Lucey of Cork and Ross, for example, had said in an editorial in his diocesan magazine: "So the Catholics of Ireland are to formally and positively go on record that they don't want it recognized any more that the Irish are overwhelmingly a Catholic people. Don't do that to the faith of your fathers."

The results of the vote on abrogation of the Catholic Church's "special position" — though, perhaps, less impressive than its proponents had wished — were seen, nonetheless, as a senior Irish government official put it, as evidence of "our openmindedness and our desire for genuine change."

Even so, as observers have been quick to note, the deletion of Article 44 marks only "a first, small step" toward elimination of what Ulster Protestants hold up as still-present evidences of "Catholic conscience" domination in the Republic.

They can still point to Article 41 of the Irish Constitution, which bans divorce for non-Catholics as well as Catholics.

In addition, they can point to Ireland's lawbooks that are replete with statutes making it a crime to import and sell contraceptives, forbidding a married couple of different religions to adopt children, and censoring "obscene" books and films.

Yet, even in these areas of alleged "Catholic conscience" Wednesday, December 20, 1972.

domination, the climate in the Republic is changing, to a degree.

Mr. Lynch's government is now working with an all-party committee on constitutional provisions, considering especially repeal of the ban on divorce. Other changes under discussion would enable the partners of mixed marriages to adopt children and would ease censorship.

A special group of four lawyers, a Catholic theologian, and a Protestant clergyman, set up by the Irish Theological Association in early 1972 "to examine and make recommendations" on provisions in the Constitution and legislation of the Republic of Ireland which "might be discriminating or divisive of the people on religious grounds," has made some pointed and relevant suggestions.

It has recommended that Article 41 which prohibits divorce be dropped from the Constitution, and has called for amendment of laws on the availability of contraceptives.

Perhaps the most crucial issue touching the question of the purported "Catholic conscience" dominance in the Republic, however, concerns the control over Irish schools, now largely in the hands of the Catholic hierarchy and religious orders.

A leading Jesuit sociologist, Father Michael MacGreil, declared recently. "The sooner we scrap purely denominational schools (branded by critics as breeding places of religious intolerance) the sooner will our youth learn to grow together as real and understanding Christians."

Some of the most pungent criticism of the present educational set-up has come from Catholic-born Noel Browne, a Labor Party member of the Dublin Parliament and a former Minister of Health.

"All of us here," he said in a speech on the matter, "are victims of the same sectarian education. Our ideologies, our social attitudes are pre-determined by our education."

"Priests don't need to go into Parliament, because they get us as children."

Dr. Browne conceded, however, that the Catholic Church was in the midst of changes, because of political necessity, the restlessness and questioning of Irish youth, and television discussions and documentaries from Britain that have had an impact on the Irish.

"There's obviously a ferment taking place now," he added. "The Church knows they've got to change and the government knows it, too."

Both those who advocate a united Ireland and those who reluctantly concede its inevitability agree that important institutional and attitudinal changes must be brought about as necessary preliminaries, observes Father Joseph Small, SJ, Professor of Political Science at Loyola University in Chicago.

Such changes, he says, will bear on the extent to which the Roman Catholic Church is prepared to accept, and accommodate itself to, the emergence of a non-sectarian, pluralist society on the island.