

# Church Authority Cited on Women's Ordination

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — A U.S. Catholic bishops' study committee, observing that there are strong pastoral and theological arguments against ordaining women to the priesthood, said "the ultimate answer" and "ultimate clarification" must come from the teaching authority of the Church.

Admitting that the question has not been "thoroughly researched" and that an "exhaustive study" is needed, the committee stated that "for the present, however, we can see only a continuation of the established discipline" that only men may be ordained.

The 1,600-word report, entitled "Theological Reflections on the Ordination of Women," was compiled by the bishops' Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices, and was approved by the bishops' Administrative Committee.

Archbishop John R. Quinn of Oklahoma City, chairman of the committee, noted that the report "is not definitive" and also omits the question of installing women in ministries of lector and acolyte. He described it as part of an on-going study of major questions and an "effort at honest dialogue."

He said the study was prompted largely by the bishops' awareness of "the deep love for the Church which underlies the growing interest of many women in the possibility of ordination."

The report, which pointed out that current Church law states that "women are not eligible for orders," listed seven Scriptural and theological "justifications" to explain why.

They include the Old Testament limitation of the priesthood to males, lack of clarity in New Testament references to "dea-

conesses," and Pauline texts directing women to a "subordinate" role in the early Church.

The Incarnation of Christ as a man is listed as an argument for a male priesthood, as the fact that Christ selected only men as his apostles and disciples.

The report acknowledged, however, that "there is no explicit authoritative teaching concerning the ordination of women that settles the question."

The strongest argument against the ordination of women listed in the report is "the con-

stant practice and tradition of the Catholic Church (which) has excluded women from the episcopal and priestly office."

"With respect to the Scriptural and theological arguments, the report observed, there is 'no clear answer.' But, it added, 'the ultimate answer must come from the Magisterium, and the current question is whether the Magisterium has already given a definite and final answer.'"

"And at this level of doubt," the report said, "only the Magisterium itself can give ultimate clarification."



## Nicaragua Aid Gaining

New York (RNS) — As homeless Nicaraguans evacuate their earthquake-devastated capital, Managua, aid for relief and rehabilitation is gathering momentum around the world.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Nicaragua, which has been assisting the poor of that country for some years, began food distribution almost as soon as the tremors ceased. Its warehouse in Managua, which contained more than a million pounds of food, was not damaged by the earthquake of Dec. 23.

In addition, just two days before the catastrophe, CRS had landed a shipment of food in Nicaragua, and on being informed of the tragedy, diverted another shipment — 518,000

pounds of food — already en route to Guatemala, to the scene.

CRS has also dispatched some 200,000 pounds of clothing from its warehouse in Brooklyn and an additional 160,000 pounds of clothing is being brought overland to Managua from nearby El Salvador.

Church World Service, the relief arm of the National Council of Churches has sent an initial shipment of \$500,000 worth of supplies to Managua, including water purification tablets, clothing, blankets and tents. It is coordinating its operation with Catholic Relief Services.

The Agency for International Development (AID) now has two

teams in Managua studying both the aftershock and the engineering situation.

Hundreds of persons have called the State Department in Washington, D.C., volunteering their services as doctors and nurses and asking where voluntary contributions may be sent. U.S.-Nicaraguan task force officials say added medical personnel is not needed at present and advise that donations be sent directly to private charity organizations.

The Archdiocese of New York has established an Emergency Fund to assist the Catholic Relief Services Disaster Unit in immediate relief of the people of Managua.

## He Becomes Priest

### 'Too Old' for Brotherhood

Manchester, Eng. (RNS) — Although rejected as "too old" by religious orders he sought to join as a lay brother, Denis Gaul, a former British naval officer, has been ordained a priest — at the age of 66.

The ordination ceremony was conducted in St. Anthony's Church here by Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop John Brewer of Shrewsbury.

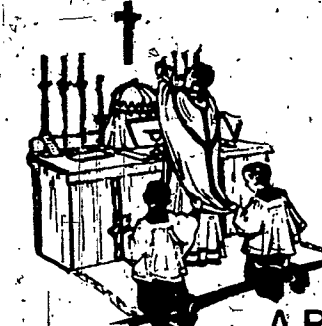
Attending the rite were the new priest's son — Father John Gaul, four daughters and four grandchildren.

Before World War II, the new priest worked in the circulation

departments of various Roman Catholic newspapers. In 1938, he joined the British Navy and became a lieutenant-commander. His wife died after the war.

In 1968, knowing that his family was self-supporting, he offered himself as a lay Brother, only to be turned down.

However, Bishop William E. Grasar of Shrewsbury accepted his application to study for the priesthood. Although he once thought he might work as a chaplain for the Apostleship of the Sea, he now believes he is more likely to stay in parish work.



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