

# Golda: Meeting with Pope 'Serious, Frank'

Jerusalem (RNS) — Upon her return to Israel, Prime Minister Golda Meir summed up her meeting with Pope Paul as "highly respectful, serious, frank," and added that "we are deeply interested in a continuation of meaningful dialogue with the Pope."

Mrs. Meir said she would recommend a meeting with the Pope to any prime minister or head of state.

In a short news conference, the Israeli Prime Minister said the Pope himself described the lengthy meeting — the first between a Pope and an Israeli head of state — as "historic."

Noting that she had not found

any particular misunderstanding concerning the status of Jerusalem, Mrs. Meir told newsmen: "I am not sure if I changed the Pope's mind on anything, but what was important was that he heard our point of view and we heard his."

She minimized the importance of a statement by Federico Alessandrini, the Vatican press officer, which she said indicated that the meeting apparently was not viewed favorably by some Vatican officials. However, Mrs. Meir said, the only important statement was the official communique agreed to by herself and the Pope.

That statement said simply that the audience which lasted

more than one hour dealt with the Middle East situation and "particular problems concerning the Holy Land."

It noted that the Pope outlined Church views on refugees and questions concerning the sacred and universal character of Jerusalem, while Mrs. Meir underlined Israel's "desire for peace" and presented her country's views on negotiations with Arab nations, terrorism and Jewish communities in other parts of the world.

The Israeli Prime Minister stressed that Pope Paul had thanked her repeatedly for Israel's safeguarding of the Holy Places.

## Vatican / NEWS

While some Vatican observers characterized the Vatican statement on the meeting between the Pope and Mrs. Meir as "cold," and some Arab newspapers termed the meeting a "failure for Israel," the meeting also drew the disfavor of conservative elements in Israel.

Right-wing opposition has demanded discussion in the Knesset (parliament) of "the violation

of dignity of the state," involved in Mrs. Meir's visit to the Vatican.

The demand came mainly in reaction to statements by Mr. Alessandrini, which indicated that the Pope accepted Mrs. Meir's request to meet only because he saw an opportunity to act for peace and human rights and that there was no "gesture of preference" for Israel.

# Merlyn Sexsmith Retires

By PEGGY PEASE

Hornell — Merlyn Sexsmith a parishioner of St. Ann's has taken part in 425 weddings — as a vocalist. "I've sung for as few as 10 people and for as many as a thousand," he recently recalled.

"I enjoyed doing it over the years, but I decided to quit at 425. I'm not going to take it up anymore."

Sexsmith started as a drummer and vocalist in one of the original "big bands." He played in three bands during his early career, "hitting the skins" for the likes of Lyle Miles and Billy Schu, Sr., of Hornell. People heard him sing and liked what they heard, and in 1932, he was asked to sing at his first wedding. He agreed, and like it.

"Back when I started, everything was sung in Latin. I already knew most of it from the Mass, so I could get along, either in English or Latin. I understood what the words meant. Later on, they let you sing secular songs before the Mass and while the people were coming in. Once the Mass started, you had to stop."

"I didn't really like that though, because half the people

## HORNELL / NEWS

were seated and half of them were standing. Things have changed since. Now you can sing secular songs throughout the service, and I've had a lot of strange requests," he said. The only time he could recall rejecting a song for reasons other than the tempo being too fast, was when a couple requested "Love Me Tonight." "I took that matter to the priest," he said, "and he said 'no, thank you.'" In addition to singing at weddings, Sexsmith later joined the St. Ann's Church Choir. "We had quite a choir back then" he said. "We had sopranos, basses, and everything in between and we had a big bass violin and several other instruments. It was very impressive."

The largest crowd he ever sang for was not at a wedding but at a State Department of Transportation convention with 3,000 people in attendance. Among those in the audience was the editor of Cavalier Magazine. One of Mr. Sexsmith's friends later ap-

proached him with a copy of the magazine. Inside, in an article, the editor mentioned his performance. Merlyn's first song had been "God Bless America," the editor recalled in the article, and while he was seated in the audience, someone nudged him and said "stand up. It's the national anthem." "I knew it wasn't," the editor wrote, "but the fellow was so good, I stood up anyway."

His first love continued to be singing in church. "I've had a lot of odd requests, and for a while, I thought someone sooner or later was going to have a wedding with a couple of banjos and a tuba. Normally they ask you to sing three or four songs at a wedding. After having played in the band for years, I could do almost anything."

"I really enjoyed it. But now I'm finished. I'm retired now from the State Department of Transportation and also retired from singing," he said.

# 'Love One Another' Theme of Congress

Melbourne — "Love one another as I have loved you," will be the theme of the 40th Eucharistic Congress which will open Feb. 18 here.

The theme was chosen by Pope Paul VI and particular attention has been paid to simplicity, to the needs of the poor and to ecumenical sensitivity.

A liturgical inauguration at St. Patrick's Cathedral here will open the congress. A Eucharistic Renewal Service will follow and throughout the week there will be a series of conferences on various aspects of Christian concern for the needy, a vigil for international reunion, a population and ecology meeting, a Blessing of the Sick and 24 special Masses, including some in Chinese and Russian.

The Melbourne National Gallery will house a replica of the Sistine Chapel; the Sistine Choir will perform; Vatican Museum treasures will be displayed, and a film and drama festival will be part of the Arts Festival Program.

Representatives from every nation in the world are expected to attend.

## K of C Gives Degrees

Dansville — The first and second degrees in the Knights of Columbus will be given here Sunday afternoon, Jan. 28, for the first time in several years.

In addition to local candidates, there will be some from

Mt. Morris and from Hornell. The Hornell Council will supply the degree team.

The ceremony will begin at 1:30 in the council rooms. Afterward, the Ladies Auxiliary of Dansville Council will serve lunch.

## ELMIRA / NEWS

# Church Requests Added Assistance For Flood Damage

Elmira Heights — Damage is still being found at St. Charles Borromeo Church as a result of the June flood.

The church's parish council has decided to seek an additional \$10,000 Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loan to replace flooring in the hall and

## Volunteers Needed

Horseheads — Teen age volunteers are needed at St. Mary Our Mother Church to help out in the nursery on Sundays during the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

Youngsters interested should call (607) 739-5792.

One adult volunteer is also needed by the parish to help teach four-year-olds. Persons interested in the adult position should contact Mrs. Barbara Sullivan at (607) 562-3211.

Courier-Journal

kitchen of the church.

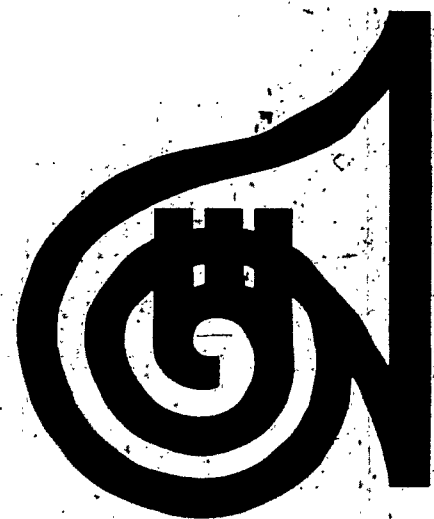
Immediately after the flood, the floor was repaired in some 20 different areas. However, the flooring is now cracking in many other places because of water hidden below the surface.

The work of replacing the floor will be delayed until after Easter so the parish's religious education program will not be interrupted.

Disaster officials have urged homeowners to be alert for hidden flood damage which could become apparent years after the disaster.

Individuals who have previously been granted SBA disaster loans are eligible to file amendatory applications for new loans if additional flood damage is found.

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