

# Palestine Seeks Papal Audience

Vatican City (RNS) — Sources here said "Palestinians" are eager to send a delegation to see Pope Paul in an effort to counter the worldwide publicity given the recent papal audience with Israeli Premier Golda Meir.

In Beirut, a newspaper in Nahar reported that a delegation of leading Palestinians will go to the Vatican very soon to seek a meeting with the 75-year-old pontiff.

However, on the heels of that published report, there came word from Vatican circles that the Lebanon and Jordanian embassies are debating among themselves, about which nation should make the formal papal audience request.

Lebanon, which has full diplomatic relations with the Holy See, is pictured as wanting to ask for the audience through its official ambassadorial channels.

Sources close to the Vatican Secretariat of State, however, said officials of the Jordanian Embassy to the government of Italy want to make the audience overtures.

The Jordanians hold that they should make the audience request because most of the Palestinian refugees are living in the Jordan area.

The Vatican has officially declined comment on the matter, including the report from Beirut that such a request will be made.

In Beirut newspapers it was noted that following the papal

# Radio 'Time' for Religion Will Not Be Required

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Commercial radio station owners would not be obligated in any way to devote a certain percentage of their air time to religious programming under a license renewal bill the Nixon Administration will propose to Congress.

Dr. Clay T. Whitehead, director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, told this to a group of producers of religious radio programs and owners of religious stations at the 30th annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters here.

"The reason this 'requirement' would be eliminated in the new legislation, Dr. Whitehead said, is because 'that kind of thing cannot be decreed from Washington. It has to come from the people — people in whom we have faith, who have moral values, integrity, self-reliance — people under God who are willing to assume a responsibility for themselves and for their fellow man.'

A spokesman of the Federal Communications Commission said the FCC does not require that station owners set aside a portion of their broadcasting schedule for religious programs. A station owner must merely satisfy the FCC that he is aware of and responsive to the needs of his community, and this may or may not include religious programming.

Only on rare occasions, the spokesman said, has the FCC questioned a radio station owner on his understanding of and responsiveness to his community's needs for what could broadly be called public affairs type programs.

Courier-Journal

audience with Mrs. Meir, the Palestinian Liberation organization cabled Pope Paul to thank him for his "taking a stand on the side of justice."

Mrs. Meir met with Pope Paul for more than one hour on Jan. 15. Following the meeting the Vatican issued a statement reminding the world of the Vatican's "warm relations" with the Arab states and the Church's deep concern about the plight of what it termed "the weak and the defenseless" Palestinians now living in exile since the takeover of their land by the Israelis during the Six-Day War.

"Seldom to my long memory here at the Vatican has such a furor been raised about a single papal audience as has been raised about this audience with Mrs. Meir," said one Vatican official, adding:

"Mrs. Meir made some remarks about the audience and her feelings during it in a newspaper article which quoted her. Some of the remarks were hardly favorable, if we are to believe that they were true quotes."

Another Vatican source told RNS he was certain that Pope Paul would be more than willing — in fact, anxious, to receive a delegation of Palestinians "to sort of balance this thing out."

"I am sure that if he receives a Palestinian delegation," he said, "the Holy Father will make it clear then that he wants to see justice prevail in the Mid-East but also that he does not want to be pictured as feeling that the Jews are unwilling to negotiate a just settlement there."

Several years ago, the FCC strongly recommended that stations could indicate their responsiveness to community needs by including programs of a religious nature in their schedules, the agency's spokesman noted, and some owners may be under the impression this is still FCC policy.

Following his talk, a member of the audience asked Dr. Whitehead if he was saying that the current regulations in radio and television broadcasting are no longer necessary and that station owners would be able "to get away with whatever they wanted to get away with."

"That's certainly not what I'm implying at all," the White House official said.

"Regulation, unfortunately, has become necessary, and we certainly can't let people get away with abuses. But we have to begin to move in the direction of a society where we have less reliance on government regulation and more reliance on individual responsibility."

# Draft Ended, Almost

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird announced the end of the draft on the day the cease-fire agreement was signed in Paris — Jan. 27.

Since no one had been drafted since December, it meant that the Nixon Administration had accomplished the goal six months earlier than the June 30 target date set earlier.

Except for a short period in 1947-48, young men in the United States had been subject to the

# Pontiff Seeks A 'Fair' Press

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, at a special audience attended by some 200 members of the Foreign Press Association of Italy, appealed to newsmen to strive to give "a fairer account" of his speeches and of "the policies and problems of the Church."

The pontiff said he viewed newsmen's tasks "with esteem," and realized the difficulties faced by "hard-working reporters." But, he said, he regretted "that much too often only one aspect of our words is given prominence" in news stories.

Referring to published criticism that he is "slow in implementing" Vatican II decisions, that he is "overly pessimistic about the Church's future," and that he "sees only the negative side of the Church's contemporary problems," the Pope offered a defense.

He said he was striving to apply the decisions of the Second Vatican Council in accord with the spirit of the Council, and added that he saw "much good" in contemporary developments in the Church, and that he was "fundamentally optimistic."

"We wish that you could give a broad echo to our hope," he said.

Pope Paul said that Vatican officials would try to offer more help to newsmen facing the task of reporting on the Church. Decisions and policies of the Church, he pointed out, derive their inspiration from the Gospel and tradition, "and not from public opinion." Often, he said, the complexity of theological and pastoral problems is not easily grasped.

# Cor Unum Plans Aid In Vietnam

Vatican City (RNS) — Cor Unum (One Heart), a two-year-old Vatican agency that coordinates Catholic relief and development organizations throughout the world, stands ready to give "full assistance" to the Vietnamese people "without distinction," according to a spokesman.

Father Henri De Reidmatten, secretary of the agency, in an interview on Vatican Radio, said that plans for offering assistance to victims on both sides of the Vietnam conflict had been worked out before the cease-fire agreement was announced by Washington and Hanoi.

Father De Reidmatten said that large quantities of clothing, medicines, and building materials had already been gathered and made ready for shipment.

In addition, he said, Cor Unum is in touch with other charitable and relief organizations, with "coordinating relief plans" being worked out.

draft ever since 1940. They will still have to register for the draft when they become 18, and will be assigned lottery numbers based on their birthdays, but Congress has mandated that the government must call up reserves and National Guardsmen before reinstating the draft in future emergencies.

Doctors and dentists will still be subject to call, but Congress is being asked to approve bonuses to help attract more volunteers in these professions.

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# Pope Paul 'Religion an Impetus'

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI said here that religion is both "a quest for God" and a response to a God Who "comes in search of us."

Speaking at his customary general Wednesday audience (Jan. 31), the Pope remarked that those who say religion "puts people to sleep" do not understand what religion really means.

"Genuine religion is a ferment, an impetus; it is a desire, an anxiety to arrive at a more complete, a fuller life. We should all strive to be great speakers, insatiable explorers of God," the Pope said.

"We would like this to be understood by all those who think, or fear, that giving up their spirit to religious experience can frustrate their freedom, their autonomy, or their energies," the Pope said, and added:

"The contrary is true. Religion is a ferment for human existence. It sparks the urge to run and seek to know more, and to marvel more."

"We believe," he said, "that it is we who go in search of God. Yes, that is true. We can take some steps. But the glorious fact is that, first of all, God comes in search of us. Revelation of the mystery of Christ tells us that it is God Who has 'come down from the stars' to seek us by becoming one of us."

Awareness and acceptance of this mystery, Pope Paul insisted, could make us "explode with love."

# Leading British Actors Host Basilica Tour

New York (RNS) — An NBC television special featuring Sir Ralph Richardson, Dirk Bogarde, Orson Welles and Dame Edith Evans will provide an historical exploration of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, April 17.

While Sir Ralph will speak for James III, Mr. Bogarde will represent Bonnie Prince Charlie. Both were pretenders to the English throne and are buried in St. Peter's.

Dame Edith will portray Queen Christina of Sweden who relinquished the Swedish throne for Catholicism, and Mr. Welles will speak for Michelangelo.

The hour-long film, "Upon This Rock," will be shown at 10 p.m. The filming marked the first time that the famed basilica was filmed while actors worked inside the mammoth edifice. It also shows the burial vaults beneath the basilica.

Sir Ralph will guide viewers through the basilica, explaining its history and join with other performers in representing historical figures related to the basilica.

## BANGLADESH

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul has named an Australian archbishop to be his ambassador to Bangladesh. Archbishop Edward Cassidy, 48, has been Pro Nuncio to Taiwan since 1970, but has been on leave from that post for about a year.

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