

Ecumenical Marriage Guidelines Issued

Charleston, W. Va. (RNS) — An official set of guidelines for marriages between Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, believed to be the first in the

nation, has been approved for a one-year trial in West Virginia by bishops of the respective dioceses.

Episcopal Bishop Wilburn C.

Campbell of the West Virginia Diocese and Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph H. Hodges of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese have jointly endorsed the guidelines, which have been published in an eight-page pamphlet.

occasion they worshipped together in one or the other Church."

The guidelines point out that although the Roman Catholic Church no longer requires written or signed promises on religious education of children, it still

requires that the Roman Catholic party "make a sincere promise to do all in his power to have all his children baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church." But the guidelines add that "the parties themselves will have to work out how they will handle this issue."

Women Priests Seen Problem In Church Unity

Last week Episcopalians and Roman Catholics held a special consultation on the ecumenical implications of the ordination of women. Father Charles Latus, chairman of the diocesan commission for ecumenical and interreligious affairs, prepared the following background report.

Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism underscored the "special place" held by the Anglican Communion in relation to Roman Catholicism. In recent years, a lively theological discussion has ensued between the two churches resulting in two agreed theological statements: one on Eucharistic Doctrine — Windsor Statement (1971); and one on Ministry and Ordination — Canterbury Statement (1973).

As the Episcopal Church here in America struggles with the question of the ordination of women, Roman Catholics are taking particular note. The question has definite ecumenical implications since the larger issue of ministry and ordination is vital to the reconciliation of our communions.

As Bishop Joseph L. Hogan indicated in his Pastoral Perspective of September 11, 1974: "We must stay alert to the issue ... the day is soon coming when we Roman Catholics will have to

face the question of official recognition of the ministry of women."

Last week a special consultation between Episcopalians and Roman Catholics on the ecumenical implications of the ordination of women was held in Cincinnati. The consultation was announced by Episcopal Bishop John Burt of Ohio, chairman of the Commission on Ecumenical Affairs of the Episcopal Church.

He said he hopes the consultation will enable Episcopalians to be informed on Catholic feelings as they decide the question of women's ordination at their 1976 general convention.

He said many Episcopalians have a "genuine concern" that the ordination of women to the full priesthood would stand in the way of reunion with Rome.

The consultation teams were headed by Bishop Charles Helmsing of Kansas City — St. Joseph for the Catholics and by Bishop Arthur Vogel of West Missouri for the Episcopalians. Bishop Vogel is one of the authors of the Windsor and Canterbury Statements published by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC).

Bishop Campbell said he and Bishop Hodges know of no other set of guidelines drawn up for the implementation of Episcopal-Catholic marriages. "If we had been aware of any we certainly would have used them instead of writing our own," he commented.

The guidelines are the result of two years of preparation by a special committee of four Episcopal priests and three Catholic priests.

In his forward, Bishop Campbell writes, "I am happy to give my imprimatur to these guidelines, and I am filled with great joy that both The Most Rev. Joseph H. Hodges, Bishop of Wheeling, and I are in full agreement as we take this step toward fulfilling Our Lord's command that we may all be one."

Bishop Hodges writes, "It is understood that these are on a trial basis, with the intention of reviewing them for renewal at the end of that (one-year) period. We pray that this joint effort may serve to protect the unity in marriage of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, preserving Christian values and benefiting their progeny."

The guidelines open with a theological statement which says: "Roman Catholics and Episcopalians share a common belief about marriage. For us, marriage is primarily the work of God. We see married life as part of His divine plan. When Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Bridegroom of the Church entered human history, He elevated married life to one of the sacramental signs of union with Him. It stands as a covenant or agreement between a man and a woman and as a covenant or agreement of those two with God."

Under initial procedures for counseling, the guidelines say that "given present social customs, the marriage will usually take place in the church of the bride," and that the priest of the church where the marriage will take place should assume the primary responsibility for the marriage arrangements.

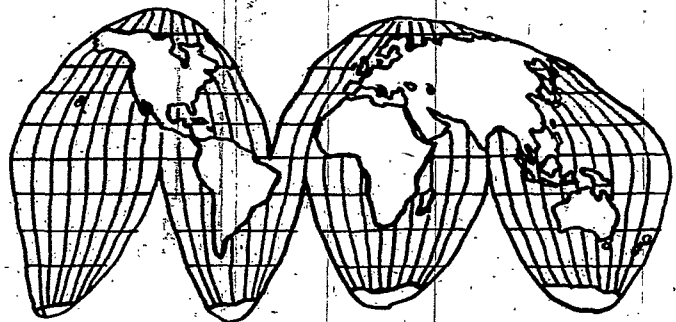
They suggest that "when possible, a joint counseling session should be planned so that both priests can be present with the parties to the marriage." If for any reason a priest refuses to solemnize a marriage and if the parties approach another priest who agrees to do it, the guidelines say, "the two priests should, if possible, discuss the problem to arrive at some mutual understanding. Each should respect the decision of the other, however the matter turns out."

If one or both of the parties has been married previously, the guidelines say, both priests must present the situation to their respective diocesan offices for resolution.

The guidelines urge that "each party should be led to a better understanding of the religious traditions and convictions embodied in the Church of the other party. Each should be encouraged to deepen his own faith and Church commitment, and to show an equal trust and respect for the commitment of his or her partner."

Although it is usually a good thing for a family to worship together, the guidelines say, "each party should be encouraged to worship in the Church to which he is united in faith. The parties should understand and respect the worship in the Church to which each is united in faith. This respect, as well as their bond with each other, could be strengthened if on

the nation and ...



... the world

From Courier-Journal Services

There are about 150 priests, 350 members of religious orders and 25 seminarians among the Vietnamese awaiting resettlement in the United States, according to Bishop James S. Rausch, general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Newly appointed as Liaison between them and the conference is retired Bishop Robert Tracy of Baton Rouge, La., who will help steer them toward appropriate ministries.

About 100 Vietnamese children are enrolled in a summer school begun last week by the Archdiocese of New Orleans and the area public school system. Sister Mary John Hotard heads the project at St. Joseph the Worker School, which probably is the first of its kind.

The Anglican Church of Canada accepts the ordination of women to the priesthood, at the discretion of any bishop concerned. The 27th General Synod of the church, assembled in Quebec City, confirmed the principle accepted by the 1973 synod, thus making it a part of canon law. Speaking of the Northern Ireland situation, Pope Paul pointed out to the new British envoy to the Vatican that "mutual love and respect are the best and most effective contributions to a just peace." He accepted the credentials of Dugald Malcolm, veteran career diplomat.

Four religious leaders told a U.S. Civil Rights Commission hearing in Boston that they would do what they could to help implement the court-ordered desegregation of Boston's public schools. Among them was Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, who declared that "integrating is morally right and good, and we must make every effort to implement what is the law of God and the law of the land."

Five bishops representing the National Conference had a "cordial and positive" conversation with President Ford on several vital issues, according to Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati. They suggested, among other things, that immigration legislation and policy be based on "humane considerations, respecting in particular the needs of families." They asked for legislation to grant amnesty to the 10 to 12 million aliens illegally settled here.

A premature attempt to bring a human life amendment to the House floor could set back the movement by a decade, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.) warned the National Right to Life Committee at its Denver convention. He reported that 206 members were in favor of holding hearings on the amendment he is sponsoring, and he reminded the committee that 290 House votes are needed to launch an amendment.

National Hotel

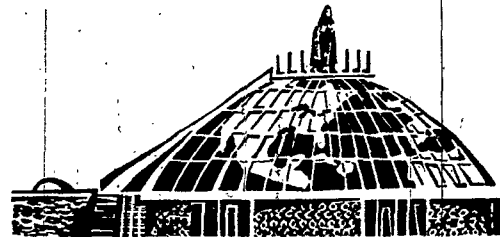
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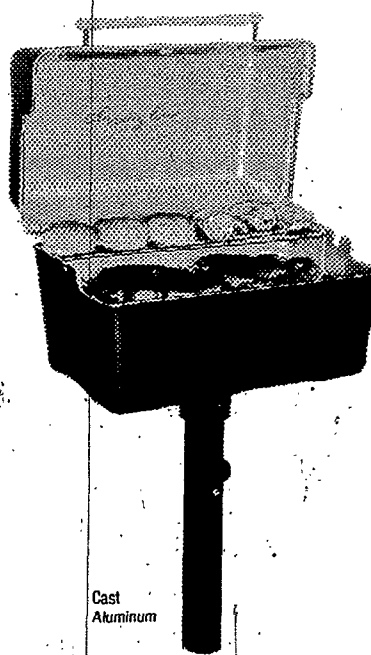
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