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Pope Calls Mary Example for Feminists

Castelgandolfo [RNS] — Pope Paul said the life of the Virgin Mary, who, "although assumed into heaven, is very close to us," is an example modern feminists could follow.

The Pope was reflecting on the meaning of the Catholic Church's teaching that Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven, in an address to more than 7,000 Holy Year pilgrims and tourists in the courtyard of his summer residence here Aug. 17.

The pontiff recalled that the Second Vatican Council taught that "spiritually, Mary is the universal ideal." Recalling also that 1975, the Church's Holy Year,

is International Women's Year, he said the Church is concerned about the "progress" that women make in their professional and social roles.

"We are convinced," he said, "that in the Christian way of thinking, a woman must be accorded recognition of her human and civil rights."

Referring to his Apostolic Exhortation on Devotion to Mary of Feb. 2, 1974, in which, among other things, he described Mary as "far from being a timidly submissive woman," and as a woman who experienced "poverty and suffering, flight and exile," Pope Paul declared:

"The character of Mary can fortify and sublimate modern feminism."

The Church supports progress in recognition of women's rights, he insisted, "but, at the same time, also guards the dignity and the mission of woman, especially the Christian woman, which by the design of God is that of a sweet daughter, a pure and strong virgin, a loving wife and mother."

On Aug. 15, Pope Paul returned to Rome by helicopter to celebrate a special Mass of the Feast of the Assumption in St. Peter's Basilica. In a sermon, he dwelt on what he called the "two

aspects" of the dogma of the Assumption, proclaimed by Pope Pius XII during the 1950 Holy Year.

"The first aspect," he said, "is the personal aspect for Mary. The Assumption was a privilege for Mary. She is the only human person to be assumed in body and soul into heaven."

"Her relationship to Christ brought with it a glorious chain of privileges. It began with her own immaculate conception and was followed by her conception of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, her innocence, and the great mystery of the Incarnation, involving her ineffable

maternity by which she became the mother of Jesus Christ, who is God."

The pontiff described "the second aspect" of the mystery of the Assumption as "universal, affecting all humanity."

Mary's Assumption, he said, is "the light of Christ proclaiming future life after death. Amid all questions and uncertainties, there is the message of revelation that man will rise again."

"Her Assumption constitutes the anticipated first fruits of future resurrections — the hope and guarantee of our destiny."

St. Mary's 'Grateful' For Public Support

OB Decision Awaited

The question hangs in the air: will they or won't they recommend the closing of St. Mary's Hospital's obstetrical unit?

But, what ever the outcome, the hospital notes, "it is gratifying that this community support (36,000 signatures on petitions and 2,000 letters supporting the hospital) was recognized by the committee and that the majority of the committee recommended that St. Mary's should continue to offer maternity services."

The committee is the Monroe Hospital Committee, which was charged by the Genesee Region Health Planning Council to determine which hospital(s) should close down their obstetrical units because of the area's declining birth rate.

But, as became evident last week with the publication of a written report, the committee was severely divided in its assessment of the obstetrical services in the county.

The 11-member committee's

report was divided along three lines: Four members proposed that no hospital obstetrical unit should close, three members recommended that St. Mary's unit close, four members recommended closing Genesee Hospital's unit.

The publication of the report was delayed 90 days following an eight-month study period.

The final decision on closing one or more obstetrical units will be made by the Monroe County Health Council. That decision will be given to Genesee Region Health Planning Council and in turn to the State Department of Health.

The State will then be in a position to apply financial sanctions against units operating contrary to the council's recommendation.

The written report and a much heavier volume of appendices were made public last week.

Last Thursday, St. Mary's issued a statement which said, in part:

"The Monroe Hospital Committee deserves congratulations for the amount of time and effort spent on this very complex issue and for their willingness to solicit public opinion. More than 36,000 people petitioned for the continuance of obstetrical care at St. Mary's and more than 2,000 wrote supporting letters. We are grateful for this expression of confidence and for the help provided by all the parishes in the diocese."

The minority report recommending closing of St. Mary's unit included in its deliberations the fact that the hospital does not provide abortions, sterilizations or family planning counseling other than natural family planning.

Bed occupancy, and costs also were among factors cited for closing the facility.

The Monroe County Health Council is expected to make its recommendation to the Genesee Region Health Planning Council on Sept. 11.

Pittsford Corn Helps Burundi Children

A Small, Small World

By BONITA BALDWIN

"I can't send my corn across the ocean," Roger Powers told Father John Reddington, "but I can give it to you and you can send what you get for it." Mrs. Powers quoted from her husband's conversation with their pastor.

The second weekend in August, Powers gave more than 350 dozen ears of corn to St. Louis Parish in Pittsford. That was all

the corn that he and his crew could pick fresh for each Mass. More than 50 volunteers helped bag and sell the corn for a \$1 donation a dozen.

Armand Tanguay, head of the St. Louis hunger task force, reported that the money will be sent to Catholic Relief Services and then to Burundi, the former Belgian Congo, to help support five clinics that aid children under 5, their mothers, and pregnant women.

The corn benefit marked the third project that St. Louis has conducted to raise money for the hungry. In June an entire liturgy focused on hunger. Bread was sold after Mass and families' hunger jars were collected, raising \$1,326. Money from that collection was sent to Burundi, to World Mercy, Inc., for emergency repair of a hospital water system in Africa and to Becket Hall where it was used to help the migrant workers in Wayne County.

Hunger jars were collected again in July, but only \$276 was raised. Tanguay said that it is the parish goal to send \$500 a month to the Burundi clinics. Hoping to boost the August collection, Roger Powers, a Pittsford farmer and operator of Powers' Farm Market on Marsh Road, donated the corn. His wife reported that they felt the symbolism of both corn and farmer involvement might help. More than \$370 was raised.



Cardinal at Bar Mitzvah

Cardinal John Krol, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Philadelphia, holds a glass of araq, a licorice-flavored liquor, as he toasts a boy's bar mitzvah during a visit to Jerusalem's Western Wall. The prelate, who was leading a Holy Year pilgrimage to the Holy Land, witnessed the joyousness of women celebrating the bar mitzvahs of their sons as he approached the Western Wall. He accepted the glass of araq from a young girl whose brother was making his bar mitzvah. The boy's mother approached Cardinal Krol and wished him the same peace she wished for her son. (RNS)

DPC Priorities

In the second in a series, the Courier-Journal explores a number of the tentative goals that were set for the diocese by the first convocation of the Diocesan Pastoral Council last June. This week's articles cover the areas of Pastoral Organization and Social Mission. Page 14.