



Hundreds of sick people, many on stretchers or in wheelchairs, assembled in St. Peter's Square last week for Pope Paul's administration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. The pope celebrated Mass for them and 60,000 other Holy Year pilgrims, and personally anointed 50 sick people, including two centenarians. At the Vatican, Pope Paul talked for more than an hour with Prime Minister Constantine Karmanlis of Greece. Further negotiations may lead to an exchange of ambassadors, according to some Vatican officials. Greece and the Vatican never have had formal diplomatic relations.

At the United Nations, General Secretary Kurt Waldheim issued a statement to commemorate Pope Paul's visit 10 years ago. He noted that "mankind has not heeded his holiness' words, 'if you wish to be brothers, let the weapons drop from your hands.'" Still, his spirit and aspirations are remembered, Waldheim said. . . . Dr. Eugene R. Balthazar of Aurora, Ill., "is the embodiment of everyone's vision of a dedicated physician," according to Father James F. Maguire, SJ, chancellor of Loyola University in Chicago. Father Maguire announced the Loyola's 1975 Stritch Medal would go to Dr. Balthazar, who at 73 is running a clinic for the underprivileged at his own expense, after 50 years in private medical practice.

A November conference on the ordination of women to the Catholic priesthood, sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, has drawn 1,200 registrations, according to a member of the planning committee. Sister Patricia Hughes said, "We had planned for 600 participants." More than 11 per cent of those registered "explicitly stated that they feel called to the ordained ministry," she added. . . . Meanwhile, Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Riley of Boston, wrote in the Pilot, archdiocesan weekly, that "the presumption, founded in Church law, that women cannot be validly ordained is difficult to disprove." . . . Mother Teresa of Calcutta will be among the speakers at the Fifth World Spiritual Summit Conference Oct. 19-24 in New York.

The Bolivian government has permitted the Oblate Fathers to resume operating their radio station in a tin mining section of the Andes on condition that they broadcast "cultural programs only." The government closed the station last January, calling it "subversive." . . . A Basque separatist who identified himself simply as Jose told newsmen in Rome that the Pope could stop the execution of urban guerrillas in Madrid if he would go there at once. Jose is one of eight Basques travelling through Europe in an attempt to organize a political, economic and diplomatic "blockade" against Spain.

Canon Lawyers Ponder Marriage, Women's Place

San Diego [RNS] — The 37th annual convention of the Roman Catholic Canon Law Society of America, is meeting here to examine canon law and also considering 360 draft proposals from the Vatican. Women in the church and marriage are the major topics for the 320 canonists attending.

Women have an inferior position in the church, but that situation is open to change was the primary conclusion reached by a study committee. While they acknowledged the long tradition of women being excluded from many church activities, especially from the priesthood, they pointed out the many changes in thinking that have occurred of late, and said that the position of women is open to the same type of change. The committee report quoted from the Vatican II Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, which stated: "With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination . . . whether based on sex, race, color or social condition . . . is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent."

Of the 360 draft proposals received from the Vatican, 120 apply to marriage, divorce and remarriage. The committee reporting on the proposals questioned the advisability of including such matters in canon law. The committee pointed out that there is no consensus on the problem, and suggested that rulings be left to national church

organizations to be determined through pastoral directives. The committee favored a softening of the marriage requirements, and criticized the draft proposals for being "inconsistent with the spirit of reconciliation stressed by Vatican II." Father Richard McCormick, SJ, of the Kennedy Institute for Bio-Ethics at Georgetown University, one of the principal speakers, argued that in some cases divorced and remarried Catholics could be admitted to the Eucharist without compromising Church discipline or the teaching that marriage is indissoluble. He said that when a marriage is "irretrievable, dead," as determined by the couple, it is up to the church to acknowledge the fact. He added that the correct options open to Catholics in "dead" marriages are an "excessively legalistic approach to Church teaching."

The society called for a 1976 symposium on Church law and women to consider further the issues involved.

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MIT (That's Right) Topic: Is Simone Weil a Saint?

Cambridge, Mass. [RNS] — The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, noted primarily as a center for research in science and technology, has hosted a lecture series that revolved around the qualities of sainthood and whether the late Simone Weil fit that description.

During her lifetime and after, the writings of Ms. Weil (pronounced Vay) have influenced the thinking of a host of scholars. T.S. Eliot was one of the first to refer to her as a saint — a judgment that was supported by literary critics Leslie Fiedler, Dwight Macdonald and William Barrett.

Prof. Andre Weil, world-renowned mathematician at the Institute for Advanced Study, spoke of his sister in one of the MIT lectures: "Her vocation or role of business in life from a very early age was to be a saint, and she quite honestly trained herself for that business. It's a matter of personal views or feelings, if you like, whether she was a good saint, a mediocre saint, a first-class saint."

Suffering as a Christian experience was one of the major themes of Ms. Weil's life and work. At age 5, she refused to eat sugar because it was not available to soldiers fighting in World War I. She then gave up wearing socks

because poor children had none.

In later life, while hospitalized in exile for tuberculosis, she refused to eat more than the official food rations in Nazi-occupied France. As a result, she wasted away and died.

On another occasion, she saw and heard the wives of Portuguese fishermen singing sad hymns in a candlelight procession. As she listened to them, she had what she described as a joyous conviction "that Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of slaves, that slaves cannot help belonging to it, and I among others."

Psychiatrist and author Dr. Robert Coles attempted to put his finger on the aspects of Ms. Weil's thought in another of the MIT lectures.

"One feels at times that there were demons within her that only a life strangely graced could possess," he said. "Hers was the introspection, the systematic and demanding introspection, of an Ignatius of Loyola, of a Saint Francis in a joyous way, and of a Saint Theresa — a sense of justice and equality perhaps second to none in this century."

After examining the complexities of Simone Weil and her

thought, some scholars have concluded that it is better to express gratitude for her life even if it is not possible to comprehend it fully.

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