

Episcopal Church Group Hits Catholic Voices at Convention

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — The national coordinator of Episcopalians United, which opposed ordination of women and revision of the Book of Common Prayer, has complained in a formal protest to Pope Paul that "certain members of the Roman Catholic Church" imposed their views on ordaining women to the priesthood during the Episcopal Church's General Convention.

Describing the action by two unofficial Catholic groups as "an unconscionable intrusion into the internal affairs of the Episcopal Church," Canon Albert DuBois declared in messages to Pope Paul and other leading Catholic churchmen that:

"We are grieved that certain

members of the Roman Catholic Church have used the occasion of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (held in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Sept. 11-23) to propagate their views on the desirability of ordaining women to the priesthood.

"Such an unprecedented tactic, employed in a time of great anguish and division within the Episcopal Church on the issue of female ordination, must be considered a serious breach of that charity and openness which has characterized ecumenical discussions between the Roman and Anglican communions," he said.

Canon DuBois said the "injurious remarks" published by a group calling itself Priests for

Equality, represented by Father William Callahan SJ and the "aggressive lobbying tactics" of women representatives of the Women's Ordination Conference, "were offensive to many delegates at the convention and considered an inexcusable intrusion into Episcopal Church affairs."

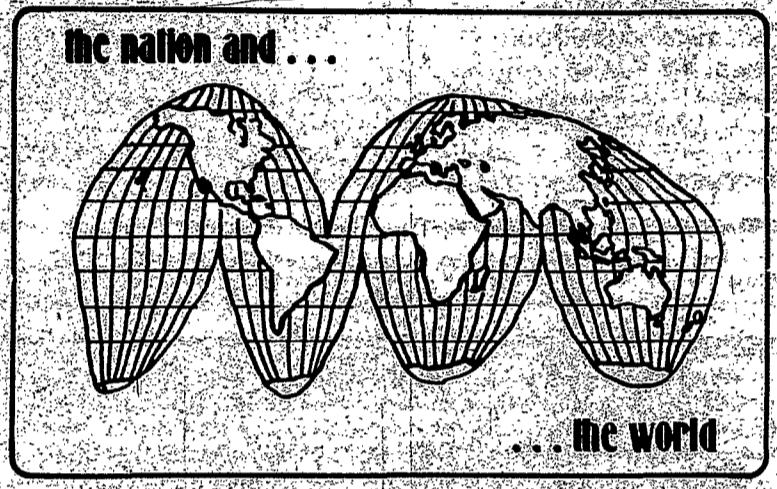
During its convention in Minneapolis the Episcopal Church broke tradition by authorizing the ordination of women.

Canon DuBois, in his message to Pope Paul, said he recognizes that the two groups "do not reflect the traditional Roman Catholic Church on the issue of female ordination." But, he added, "The fact, however, serves to underscore and manifest what appears to be a growing and stident protestant spirit within the Roman communion — the spirit which muffles and confuses the usually clear voice of Rome."

"We beg Your Holiness, in the interests of true ecumenism and in the hope for that unity for which we all pray, to reaffirm, not only to other Christian communicants, but to those with the Roman communion, the Church's unchanging teaching on holy orders," the Episcopal leader said.

Copies of Canon DuBois' message were sent to the Cardinal Franjo Seper, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Archbishop Jean Jadot, Apostolic Delegate in the U.S., and Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati, president of the U.S. Catholic bishops' conference.

Episcopalians United claim 500,000 members within the 3.6 million member Episcopal Church.



In a rare appearance at St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, Cardinal Terence Cooke reaffirmed that the Catholic Church is neutral on political aspirants but "cannot be neutral" on abortion. Cardinal Cooke did not refer to either presidential candidate or to any local candidate in his homily, and did not state that Catholics should vote only for anti-abortion candidates.

In a related event, a survey, conducted by the Becker Research Corporation in Boston, shows that 63 per cent of those interviewed support the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on abortion and 26 per cent favor a constitutional amendment to bar abortions. Among Catholics, 50 per cent favored the Supreme Court ruling, 35 per cent supported a constitutional amendment. Among Protestants, 73 per cent supported the court decision, 18 per cent supported the amendment. Among Jewish residents the figures were 93 per cent and 3 per cent. Officials of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis said that "underground" Latin Masses celebrated here by visiting traditionalist Catholic priests are "valid but illicit." The Masses are authentic but participation in them violated Church laws, a spokesman explained.

In a move believed to be without precedent for an American Catholic congregation, the Vatican has ordered the two-year dispute, in Mt. Vernon, Va., between Bishop Thomas J. Welsh of Arlington and a "progressive" faction in Good Shepherd parish, Mt. Vernon, into arbitration. Cardinal John Wright, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, appointed Bishop Joseph H. Hodges of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va., to be the arbitrator. The Good Shepherd complaint took on considerable significance as a result of the Vatican action, indicating among other things, that Vatican concern for due process in the two-year-old Diocese of Arlington. President Ford met with nearly 150 Jewish leaders at a White House reception September 20 and discussed U.S. aid to Israel, the plight of Soviet Jews and efforts to achieve a Middle East peace settlement. Ford told the Jewish leaders that he was "making every effort" to increase the number of Jews allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

Roman Catholic Bishop Franciszek Jop, of Opole, Poland, died Sept. 24 at the age of 78. He was the first "ordinary" or resident bishop named to head the diocese when it was established by the Vatican in 1972.

Strife from Northern Ireland's women's peace movement spread to England as 5,000 Roman Catholic and Protestant women turned out for a rally in Liverpool and urged an end to terrorism and killing in Ulster. The rally, which followed similar gatherings in Belfast and Londonderry, had the blessing of Liverpool's Catholic Archbishop Derek Worlock and Anglican Bishop David Sheppard.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the famed missionary to the destitute and dying in India, is reportedly taking an active role in the Catholic Church efforts opposing the growing sterilization campaign sponsored by the government of Indira Gandhi.

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