

Church, South Africa About to Collide on Apartheid Policies

Dispatches from South Africa last week underscored the growing tensions between government and the Church. The bishops of that nation met in plenary session and have strongly criticized the government's policy of apartheid and both bodies appear to have locked themselves on a collision course, most notably over the question of desegregation of schools.

Johannesburg (RNS)—The South African government and the Catholic Church are on a collision course over the Church's desegregation of some of its previously all-white parochial schools

An education official announced here Feb. 15 that the first steps in "deregistering" the newly integrated Catholic schools would be taken within a few days unless the non-whites were expelled.

Pretoria (RNS)—The Catholic Church, in a strong new challenge to the government of white-ruled South Africa, denounced the nation's "social and political system of oppression," and warned that only a "radical revision" of the system can prevent the "horrors of civil war."

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), meeting in plenary session here, issued a statement calling for power sharing between the 4.5 million whites and the 18 million voteless blacks.

"Realizing that South Africa has entered a critical phase in the rejection by the majority of its people of a social and political system of oppression," the bishops said, "we add our corporate voice as leaders of the Catholic Church in this country to the cry for a radical revision of the system."

"People starved of freedom, deprived of their just rights (under an official policy of apartheid, or racial segregation),

humiliated in their personal and corporate dignity, will not rest until a proper balance of justice is achieved."

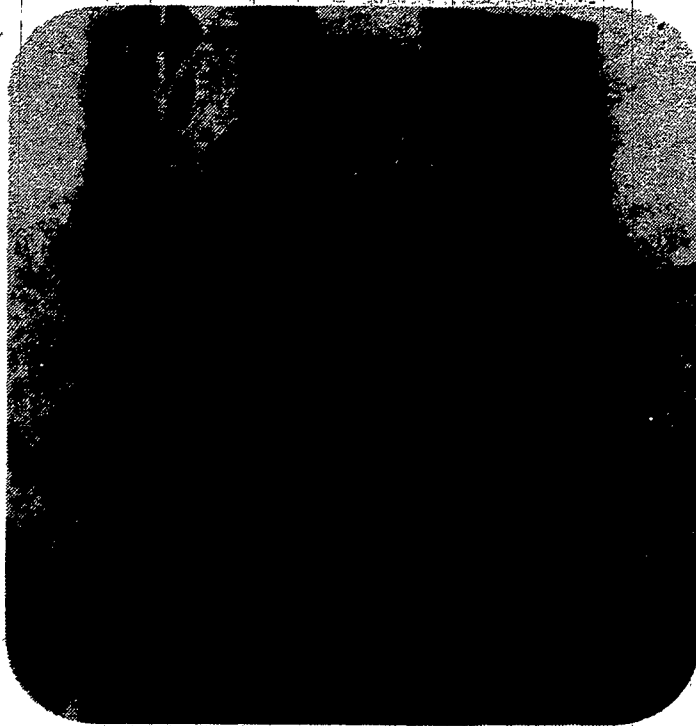
"We again profess our conviction, so often repeated," said the bishops of South Africa and neighboring Swaziland and Botswana, "that the only solution of our racial tensions consists in conceding full citizen and human rights to all persons in the republic, not by choice on the false grounds of color, but on the grounds of the common humanity of all men, taught by our Lord Jesus Christ."

The statement was issued as students returned to school in the black township of Soweto, outside Johannesburg, after a day of book burning and protest against the government's policy of separate education for blacks.

When the Catholic schools opened their doors to non-whites in January, the government warned that they were breaking the law of apartheid and gave them until the second week of February to reply.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) responded with a strong statement that it would not back down.

The SACBC, following a plenary meeting, went even further and announced the Church would also begin to desegregate its hospitals, hostels, orphanages, and other institutions.



Seized

A South African policeman seizes a young demonstrator during racial violence in a black township near Capetown.

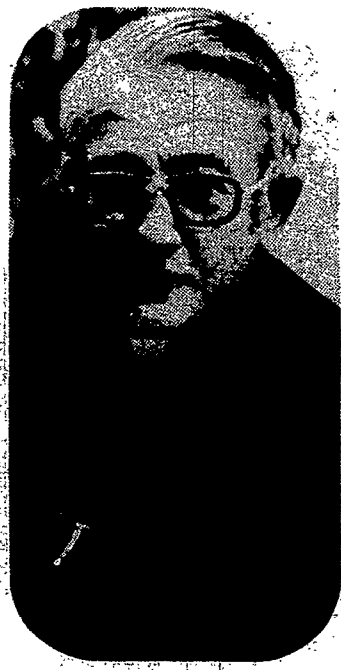


Site of Cross

The Oregon Supreme Court has ruled by a narrow margin that this cross on a hill on city-owned land may continue to stand in Eugene, Ore., despite arguments that it violated the state and U.S. Constitutions. The 4-3 decision overruled two lower courts, and reversed its 1969 decision that the cross violated establishment of religion clauses.

Rare Specimen

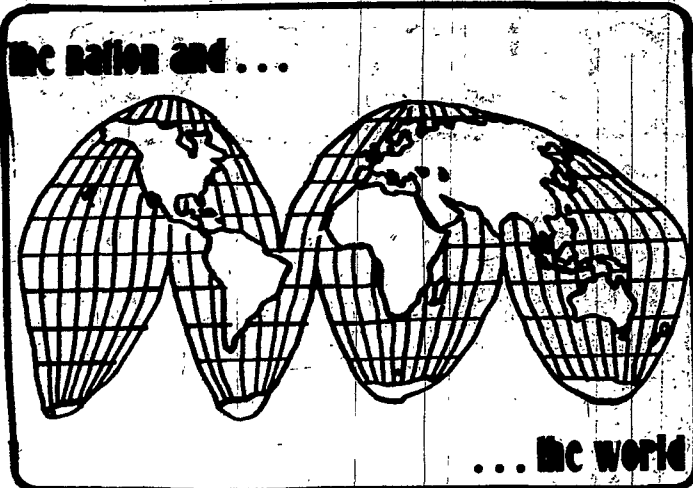
Father Fred Woodford, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Mankato, Minn., calls himself a "rare specimen." He belongs to both the Masonic Lodge and the Knights of Columbus and in public appearances is urging members of the two fraternal organizations to work together to eliminate prejudice. The priest became a Mason in 1974 after the Vatican lifted the ban against Catholic membership in the group.



SILVER JUBILEE RECORD OFFERED

A recording of the late Bishop James E. Kearney's Silver Jubilee Mass is available at St. Bernard's Seminary, in the bookstore. The Mass was sung by the seminary choir in 1957. The price of the record is \$2.

The Courier-Journal erroneously reported last week that a Funeral Mass record was offered at the seminary.




Events in Africa continued to hold the attention of churchmen throughout the world last week. In Rome, Pope Paul VI described the recent killing of seven Roman Catholic missionaries to Rhodesia as an irrational act of blind violence. "It is true," he said, "that in that country a racial struggle has been unleashed and repressed. But against those seven missionaries no charges could be brought. There is no motive (for their killing), one can imagine, because their presence, their religious and charitable activities, their non-involvement in the war taking place there, and their support for the cause of justice — all these should rather constitute a claim to their being recognized and accepted."

Rosemary Goldie, the Australian woman who at one time held the highest administrative position ever assigned a woman by the Vatican — undersecretary of the experimental Council of the Laity, has been named a full professor of the Pontifical Lateran University. It is the first time in the 204-year history of the institution a woman has held a full professorship. . . . In a somewhat related item, however, ANSA, the Italian News Service, has noted that the number of women in administrative posts in the Curia has diminished over the past few years. ANSA says that in 1975 some 271 women, both religious and lay, were working as members of agencies in the Vatican. The 1977 Vatican YearBook, however, lists a number closer to 250.

The flood-stricken Santa Cruz area of central Bolivia, where torrential January rains caused damage to crops and homes, will receive a \$10,000 allocation of funds from Catholic Relief Services, to initiate a six-month rehabilitation program for the area.

The Church 1977



Fr. Andrew Greeley

I really get frosted at those who support you off the record and are silent or even endorse the other side on the record. You really don't need that kind of friend when the lights go out in the barroom and the fight begins.

As far as I know, I'm the only one who is not part of the neanderthal wing of the Catholic church who has been critical of the Detroit putsch of the liberal bureaucratic clique which apparently effectively succeeded in usurping the role of representative of the Catholic laity and clergy over against the hierarchy. It is nice to have a lot of people tell you off the record that you're right, but it's not much help when you have to face the self-righteous, would-be messiahs pretty much on your own.

Of course, I can understand the problem. Few bishops really wish to go on the public record and say that Cardinal Dearden made a disastrous mistake in turning the bicentennial celebration over to a scheming clique of liberal incompetents. Respect and reverence for Cardinal Dearden is such that most priests and bishops do not want to criticize him in public.

On the other hand, if you have to live and work in an

environment peopled by some of the characters who went to Detroit, you really don't want to pick a fight with them. They are not very bright, but they are convinced of their own moral goodness; like all enthusiastic fanatics, they can make life very difficult indeed for those who have to put up with them. So just as you have to be able to exist without ecclesiastical salary to be able to criticize bishops, I guess you have to be able to exist without ecclesiastical salary to criticize the liberal crazies. O.K. Fair enough.

But just to show you that I'm not the only one who was made sick to his stomach by the Detroit meeting, let me quote from a letter from a well-known liberal Catholic academic — who, since he must live in the same environment as the crazies, discreetly remains anonymous:

"The caucuses of 'National Catholic' crazies and their forced revisions of initial bad texts; the overwhelming quantity of undigested materials; the blown-up character of confused delegates, etc. — all made Boss Tweed look like the angel Gabriel. I kept thinking through it all of the performance of the Fulda Conference in Germany and the splendid, solid texts prepared for their national conference four years ago.

"You have been courageous and shrewd to spot the whole procedure from its inception and to blast it consistently along the way. You will be criticized, of course, but you're used to such flack by now. It is already said that you are excessive in your language against the pirates amongst the princes. I judge they need such blunt exposure. I don't know which I dislike the most anymore: the fanatics of the right or the guerrillas of the left."



A Year Later

The small boy resting in the marketplace in San Pedro, Guatemala, testifies to the fact that life has returned to a nearly normal basis. Like others, though, he remembers the day — Feb. 4, 1976 — when the earth shook and his life was disrupted. The massive earthquake which struck San Pedro and other cities in Guatemala killed thousands and destroyed many homes. Since then, Southern Baptist missionaries report, many Guatemalans have based their lives on an "unshakable" faith in Jesus Christ. "It's the only thing that didn't shake on Feb. 4, 1976," they related. (RNS)