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Idi Amin and His 'Horror Chamber'

BY RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Back in early February 1971, just after he had taken over as ruler of Uganda in a military coup, Maj. Gen. Idi Amin Dada invited some 50 religious leaders to his home for tea and told them: "Whatever I do will be done for God and my country."

"All I want to do," said the new leader of the East African nation, "is reassure you, together with all Ugandans and the whole world, that our new Republic of Uganda will be guided by a firm belief in the equality and brotherhood of man, and in peace and goodwill."

Four years later, Thomas P. Melady, U.S. ambassador to Uganda from 1972 to 1973, charged that Amin had turned "the pearl of East Africa" into a "horror chamber."

In February 1976, the U.S. State Department voiced deep concern about "massive violations of human rights in Uganda," and President Jimmy Carter recently declared that the actions of the Ugandan ruler "have disgusted the entire civilized world."

The President and the State Department

have made it clear that they believe Amin is directly responsible for the recent deaths of Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum and two Christian Ugandan officials.

Archbishop Luwum and the two cabinet ministers were arrested for allegedly plotting the overthrow of the Amin regime and were killed on Feb. 16, Amin claimed in a car crash as they tried to escape.

Virtually universal skepticism and denunciation greeted the "accident" story. Vatican Radio described Uganda's version as "unswallowable." It said news of the archbishop's death was "painful, but not surprising; and called him a martyr.

The prestigious International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, described the deaths as "assassinations." The denunciation of the 6 foot 4 former heavyweight boxing champion of the Ugandan army has been universal.

"Not surprising," said Vatican Radio, perhaps because of Amin's past history. He has abolished Parliament, purged the judiciary and the civil service, expelled

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Clergy, Legislators Talk Pure Waters

Thirty-six urban churches continued their battle last week for a change in the Pure Waters rate base. Their spokesmen got nine county legislators to listen to a complaint of inequity and to promise that they would

take it to the whole legislature and try to do something about it. The pastors asked for "some concrete response by April 5."

The legislators, all from city districts, met at Blessed Sacrament School Wednesday with representatives of 19 Catholic and 17 Protestant parishes. The complaint is that in the city, but not elsewhere, assessed valuation of property is figured into the Pure Waters rate structure. As a result, the city churches are carrying more than their fair share of the program's cost, their spokesmen pointed out. They noted too that the bills had become especially burdensome to dwindling downtown congregations.

The charge of inequity has been brought also by other non-profit institutions and by neighborhood organizations and social action groups. It has not been refuted, or even denied, in the course of the public discussion that began a year ago. A task force commissioned by the legislature recommended changes that would take assessed valuation out of the rate structure, but the proposals were rejected by the county body's Public Works Committee last June.

The water pollution abatement program involves construction of water treatment plants and sewer systems, and rehabilitation of deteriorating systems.

Church spokesmen at the Wednesday meeting were Fathers Bernard Dollen of St. Andrew's, Frederick Eisemann of Holy Family and John P. Norris of Blessed Sacrament, and the Rev. Richard Comegys Jr. of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Carter Taps Baroni for HUD Post

Washington (RNS) — Msgr. Geno Baroni, a Washington arch-diocesan priest and a leading national advocate of ethnicity and the revitalization of urban neighborhoods, has been selected by President Carter to serve as an assistant secretary with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The 46-year-old priest, who now heads the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs — an outreach to neighborhoods in more than 40 cities — is expected to handle neighborhood development, consumer affairs and regulatory functions for HUD, in addition to other duties.

The appointment of Msgr. Baroni was recommended by HUD Secretary Patricia Roberts Harris, who reportedly is intent on stressing neighborhood development in treating urban problems.

A spokesman at the Washington-based center founded by Msgr. Baroni six years ago said the priest has indicated he will accept the HUD post and sever his ties to the center.

Msgr. Baroni, former executive director of the Office of Urban Affairs of the Washington archdiocese and former executive director of the U.S. Catholic Conference Urban Task Force, has been a leading proponent of ethnicity and neighborhood revitalization.

(Msgr. George A. Cocuzzi, the Rochester diocesan vicar for Urban Ministry, worked at the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs under the supervision of Msgr. Baroni).



Meanwhile, in Rhodesia

Undeterred by repressive government acts, the Vatican is continuing its presence in southern Africa. Pope Paul has appointed Father Tobias W. Chiginya bishop of Gwelo, Rhodesia. A native of that country, Bishop-designate Chiginya becomes Rhodesia's second black bishop. The announcement came even as the Rhodesian government stripped Bishop Donal Lamont of Umtal, right, of his citizenship and deported him for allegedly hiding facts about terrorists in his diocese. (RNS)

U.S. Bishops To Reconsider Communion In the Hand

Washington (RNS) — The American Catholic bishops — for the third time — will discuss whether they should ask the Vatican for permission to allow reception of the Holy Eucharist in the hand.

Although bishops in more than 40 countries have been authorized to permit communion-in-the-hand, the U.S. bishops have twice turned down a request by their liturgical committee — in 1970 and 1973 — to approve the practice and request Vatican permission.

Following another request by the liturgy committee, the Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops decided to have the matter discussed in closed executive session during the bishops' May 3-5 general meeting in Chicago.

According to the U.S. Catholic Conference Office of Information, the bishops' committee decided to treat the question in closed session because another public debate on the question might distract attention from other matters on the three-day meeting's agenda.

Since 1969, the Vatican has given permission to national conferences of bishops which requested the practice.

Chrism Mass Plans Nearly Complete

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn — Before the great rites of the Chrism Mass are celebrated at St. Mary's Church this year, there is a myriad of activities which must be completed. To name a few: typing letters, sealing envelopes, planning the liturgy, running the printing press and selecting a hymn of praise.

All these duties and more befall those who have been readying, since January, the celebrations slated for April 5.

Who brings the oils? Where are the silver urns? Are the vestments ready? How are the oils blessed in the liturgy brought to the parishes? Will those attending be able to see the bishop during the ceremonies? These are but a few of the questions which must be answered by the Seneca-Cayuga Regional Liturgy Committee.

"The most beautiful part of the experience for me has been seeing the cooperation among the parishes to make this a community celebration," said Mrs. Judy Davis, a member of the St. Alphonsus parish and representative to the regional group. "I guess working on a liturgy committee is just a way of bringing a gift."

Her sentiments are shared by others who have been helping Bruce VanDyken, religious education coordinator at St. Mary's, to put together a four-page educational package that will be mailed to every parish in the diocese.

The packet offers a

suggestion for a special liturgy, for use in one's home parish, that emphasizes the consecration and call to service shared by God's people.

It also contains a suggestion for a homily and religious education class discussion on the significance of oil and anointing.

"The parishes of the region are really considering themselves as hosts. We hope, as one of the ten regions of the diocese, that we can make this event a joyous one for the bishop and all the people," noted Father Elmer Heindl, regional coordinator.

Rehearsals are underway by the choir at St. Mary's. Father Louis A. Sirianni, associate pastor at neighboring Sacred Heart Church, polled the committee for favorite hymn selections.

Representatives from St. Hyacinth's, Holy Family, St. Alphonsus, St. Mary's, Auburn; St. Joseph, Weedsport; St. Patrick, Seneca Falls; St. Patrick, Aurora; and St. Michael, Union Springs, to mention a few, have shared ideas.

They have voiced their concerns over such matters as providing maps to St. Mary's, and have welcomed the offer of Marriage Encounter to host a coffee hour following the rites.

The liturgy booklet has been laid out, and the liturgy itself has been prepared by a committee chaired by Father James C. Enright.

The documentation of the evolution of the Chrism Mass is sparse, but one of the earliest liturgical documents we possess, the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (215 A.D.) indicates that the bishop blessed "the oil of exorcism" and Chrism, "the oil of thanksgiving," during the Easter Vigil, before the baptism of the catechumens.

By the fifth century several differing practices existed. In some locales, blessing of oils was included in the Eucharistic Prayer at the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper.

However, St. Augustine, writing about 420 A.D., speaks of a separate Chrism Mass which the bishop consecrated with 12 priests, assisted by seven deacons and seven subdeacons. The eighth century found three Holy Thursday Masses, one of which was the Chrism Mass.

In our own century, Pope Pius XII called for a special Chrism Mass distinct from the solemn evening liturgy of the Last Supper. It was to be celebrated on Holy

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