

Pope Lauds U.N. Aides For 'Year of the Child'

By PAMELA MENDELS
RNS Staff Writer

Vatican City—The wholehearted interest of the Roman Catholic Church in the forthcoming United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Child (IYC) was emphasized by Pope Paul at a meeting here with U.N. officials.

The pontiff held a special audience, June 26, for Henry R. Labouisse, the American executive director of the U.N. International Children's Fund (UNICEF), the sponsoring agency, and with John Grun, director of the IYC Secretariat in New York.

The Year of the Child, set for 1979, is intended, among other things, to persuade countries around the world to streamline existing programs for the welfare of children and to add new ones.

Pope Paul praised the work of UNICEF on behalf of children around the world, but emphasized that the Church would continue to refuse cooperation with programs that supported contraception or abortion.

"We wish to state at the outset," said the Pope, "how much we appreciate the great good that UNICEF has done over the years for the children of the world.

"We have wholeheartedly supported all your worthy activities, aimed at providing for the basic needs of children, while at the same time, we have repeatedly expressed our disassociation from any involvement in projects that may directly or indirectly favor, contraception, abortion or other practices that do not respect the supreme value of life."

(A UNICEF aide in Rome said the organization does not sponsor any programs for abortion. She said, however, that in some nations, where the government approves, UNICEF has been working on family planning programs.)

The Pope continued: "With regard to the International Year of the Child, it had been the concern of the Holy See that such an event should not be the occasion for multiplying initiatives that would have no direct bearing on the welfare of children.

"The Holy See is pleased to note that the same concern has been manifested by the General Assembly of the United Nations in determining the general objectives of the IYC, which speak of enhancing the awareness of the special needs of children on the part of decision-makers and the public, and which advocate sustained activities for the benefit of children."

The pontiff went on to decry abuse and exploitation of children, especially sexual abuse of children for money, and stressed that youngsters must be raised in homes where the parents are married.

"Despite technological progress," he said, "children still suffer and die from lack of basic nourishment, or as victims of violence and armed conflicts that they do not even understand. Others are victims of emotional neglect. There are people who poison the minds of the young by passing on to them prejudices and empty ideologies. And today, children are exploited even to the point of being used to satisfy the lowest depravities of adults. A despicable aspect of this exploitation is the fact that it is often controlled by powerful forces motivated by financial gain."

Pope Paul returned to the theme of abortion. "Extending our gaze still further over the world situation," he said, "we see that there is another harmful discrimination to which the child is subject and which would worthily engage the full attention of the IYC. In our time, some people consider the child a burden and a restriction on freedom, rather than the living expression of the love of parents.

"Others deny to the child the fundamental right to have a mother and father united in marriage.

"But all society must vigorously reply that the child indeed has the God-given right to be born, the right to be born into a normal family.

"It would be a form of contradiction if, on the occasion of the International Year of the Child, activities were to be promoted, whose inspiration and purpose were to make children less welcome, or even to prevent them from being born into society."

"The child," the pontiff insisted, "must be viewed as a child, as a human person, and not simply as a potential adult. The child has the right to the integral development of his or her personality."

That is why, he added, "the role of the family is irreplaceable . . . since the child cannot be understood and assisted apart from the family, which is the first educator towards physical, psychological, intellectual, moral and religious development."

Pope Paul said he hoped that services for children would be expanded and improved. He expressed special concern for poor and handicapped children, saying, "We are confident that such programs will give particular priority to the needs of disadvantaged children, the physically and mentally handicapped, those abandoned and those in special situations of distress and suffering."

The pontiff also noted that various Church organizations are preparing to participate in the IYC.

"The Church," he said, "holds a special interest in children. Above all, Christ identifies the child with His own person: 'Whoever receives one such little one in my Name, receives me.'

"For the Catholic Church, therefore, service to the child is not a transitory goal, but rather a permanent task invested with dignity and enduring priority."

'Wife Beaters' Face Arrest in New York

New York (RNS)—New York City's Police Department has agreed to arrest men who beat their wives when there is reasonable evidence that they committed the crime.

The agreement reached in an out-of-court settlement does not change the existing law but "recognizes that in practice, in the past, married women in assault cases have been treated differently from unmarried women," according to a corporation counsel.

Police have commonly handled assaults in wife-beating cases by trying to reconcile the parties or mediating, rather than

handling them as criminal offenses.

The agreement was signed by the city's corporation counsel for the police department and lawyers for 71 women who said they had been repeatedly beaten by their husbands and were denied police and Family Court protection. The court action is still pending and is unaffected by the agreement.

"This is the first official recognition by any law enforcement agency in New York that wife assault is serious and pervasive," said Laurie Woods, a lawyer for the women. She said battered women are now "officially entitled to the same police

protection as other victims of crimes.

Corporation Counsel Allan G. Schwartz said he and Police Commissioner Robert J. McGuire helped develop the agreement because the suit represented a situation "involving serious personal and civil rights.

The agreement stipulates that the police department must send one or more officers to respond to every woman who reports a wife-beating complaint. If there is reason to believe criminal assault has been committed, the police must arrest the husband or locate him, if he has left the premises.

NFP Classes Scheduled

Natural Family Planning Classes have been scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira and for Tuesday, July 25 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church in Pittsford. Certified instructors are Nick and Beryl Iven for the Elmira class and Bill and Bobbie Jackson for Pittsford. The \$20 fee includes the cost

of three sessions, NFP books, and supplies.

couples in Elmira and six couples in Pittsford.

Charismatics

The Glory of Yahweh, a charismatic prayer group which meets at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph, will be led in celebration of the Eucharist by Father Jerome Robinson, OP, on July 24.

Engaged and married couples who have decided to use NFP are asked to register for the class by calling the Ivens at (607) 594-2380, or by calling the NFP office in Rochester at (716) 464-8705. Registration is limited to four

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