

# U.S. Asked Vatican To Pressure Romero, Church Official Says

Washington (RNS) — The United States recently asked the Vatican to help moderate opposition by the late Archbishop Oscar Romero to continued military aid to embattled El Salvador, but the Vatican, refused, says a leading U.S. Catholic Church official.

Father Alvin McCoy, OFM, president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in the U.S.A., said he was told of the effort while visiting the civil war-threatened Central American country March 22-23 as a member of an ecumenical fact-finding team.

The team has declared that the country's army has been working in cahoots with a right-wing paramilitary group that has "supposedly been proscribed by the junta."

The team also asserted that "repression responds to impetus coming from elements at the highest levels of the government."

They had met with Archbishop Romero, other religious leaders, government and opposition figures and refugees coming from violence-afflicted country and city areas.

The charge that the army had worked with ORDEN, a right-wing paramilitary group, was one of several "key findings" listed by the delegation which also reported that from the time the junta took power, Jan. 9 through March 13, 682 persons had

been killed and 176 disappeared.

Father McCoy said that his source for the report on the U.S. involvement with the Vatican is a Salvadoran church official whose word he trusted but who does not want to be identified.

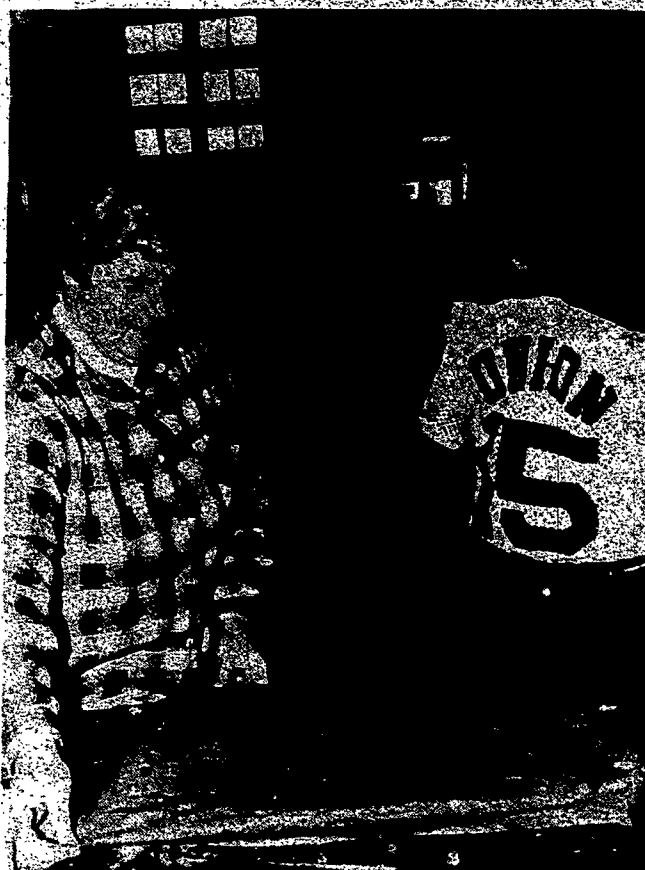
"He mentioned that the U.S. has applied pressure, or at least asked that pressure be applied through the Vatican ... to see if something couldn't be done so he wouldn't oppose U.S. military aid to El Salvador."

The Franciscan priest said he didn't know whether the pressure came through President Carter's personal envoy to the Vatican, former New York City Mayor Robert Wagner, or through other channels.

The reaction by the Roman Catholic leadership in El Salvador to these alleged pressures by the U.S. government was "indignation," the priest said. "They were offended."

Vittorio Brod, Vatican desk official at the State Department, said he had "never heard of Father McCoy and I don't know his sources."

He said there had been an "open dialogue" between Romero and the U.S. and a variety of countries on the situation there. I would not describe our conversations with Romero as "pressure," adding that the State Department's contacts with the Vatican are "private."



Sister Pat Flynn and CETA trainee Willie McDuffe prepare a new piece of furniture.

## CETA Joins Parish Woodshop

Thirteen young people have been enrolled in a special CETA program at St. Michael's Woodshop this year. The Woodshop, located at St. Michael's parish, 869 N. Clinton Ave., has taught woodworking for a number of years under the tutelage of Sister Patricia Flynn.

The CETA program at St. Michael's is being run by the Catholic Youth Organization and funded by CETA. The youth employment program provides job training for the

students who are learning to build bookshelves, desks, tables and other necessary office furniture. The CETA program began in January and will end in September.

The CETA job training program requires that participants be economically disadvantaged, be in school (high school or college), and that they maintain at least a "C" grade point average, according to Tony Alvarez, CYO staffer.

They will be working part time until summer vacation and then the program will provide full time summer jobs.

## Five Become Acolytes

Five seminarians from the Rochester diocese were among nine students who were installed into the office of acolyte March 27 at St. Bernard's Seminary.

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey presided at the Eucharist and ceremonies installing Robert Bourcy of Holy Ghost Parish; Thomas Carr of St. Helen's; Raymond Fleming of Kalispell, Mont., studying for Rochester diocesan service; George Gubio of St. Casimir's in Elmira; and Dennis Sewar of Good Shepherd.

men and women. One of the truly significant statements of Vatican II, contained in "Gaudium et Spes" (Joy and Hope, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), states that involvement in the Paschal Mystery "holds true not only for Christians, but for all men and women of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all, and since the ultimate human vocation is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to everyone the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery." (art. 22)

This means, therefore, that the mission of the Church is not to go to people and tell them: "If you accept the Gospel, this and this will happen to you." Rather, the Church must see Christ already active among people who may not know Him. The Church must understand that the selflessness and dedication to human integrity of many who are "non-believers" witness to the fact that the "Unknown Christ" is already doing things among them. Preaching the Gospel, therefore, often will mean helping people to see that coming to know Christ will help them to understand what is already happening in their lives, as the unseen Christ draws them to the Father.

This is simply to say that the Church must be THE SACRAMENT — the Sign to her own members and to the world that the Crucified-Risen One is acting through His grace among all people.

## Insights in Liturgy

### Sacrament: Community

By Msgr. William H. Shannon  
The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council described the Church in a document called "Lumen Gentium." The title is actually the first two words of the Latin version of the document: the words mean "Light of the Nations." The first chapter in this document on the Church, the Light of the Nations, is a chapter on the Church as Mystery. Beginning the document with this insight into the reality of the Church is of profound significance. The word "mystery" ("mysterion" in Greek) is equivalent of the Latin word "sacramentum" or, in English, sacrament.

Hence, when they speak of the church as "Mystery," the Council Fathers are describing the Church in sacramental terms. They are, moreover, by putting this insight into the very first chapter of the document, telling us that, when we think of Church, our first thought should not be that it is an institution or a society, but that it is a sacrament. This is to say that it is the Sign of Celebration of a Reality and that Reality is the Crucified-Risen One Who is present in our midst and active in the world by His grace. The Church, in other words, is the Sacrament telling us that Jesus Christ is present and acting in the world.

If the Church community is to be true to its nature as

Sacrament, then it must point not to itself but to Christ. For a Sign (and sacrament is sign) of its very nature must point to something other than itself. A sign that points to itself falsifies its reality as a Sign. A Church, therefore, that is overly occupied with its own structure and its lines of authority runs the risk of failing to be faithful to its essential reality, which is to be the Sign that points to Christ. A Church that points only to herself will fail to be the Sacrament of Christ.

In being the Sacrament of Christ, the Church must resist the temptation (though she has not always succeeded in doing so) of identifying herself with the Kingdom of God. (Loisy once said cynically, "Christ proclaimed the Kingdom and we got the Church instead.") The Kingdom of God is the grace of Christ in its eschatological triumph. The Kingdom of God is the Whole Christ, embracing the human totality, full realized. When the Church mistakenly identifies herself with the Kingdom (a reality that belongs only to the last days), she becomes the victim of a false triumphalism. No, the Church is not the Kingdom; rather it is the Instrument of the Kingdom. It is the Sign that the grace of Christ is operative in the whole world — the grace that will fully triumph in the end times.

It is important that we realize that the Church is the Sacramental Sign not only that the grace of Christ is active in the Church, but that it is active among all

## Information Session On Religious Life

The Sisters of St. Joseph will have an Information Day for anyone considering the religious life from 1 to 7 p.m. Saturday, April 26 at the Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave.

The program will include presentations on the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, their spirit, spirituality and ministries. There will be planned for Scriptural reflections on the meaning of "vocation" or "call." A Eucharistic liturgy and supper will conclude the program.

Anyone desiring information or wanting to make reservations should write to Sister Kathleen Wedder, 4095 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14610 or call 254-1325. A donation of \$2 is requested.

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