

People and Events Of the World and Nation

Court Strikes Down Law Preventing 'Kiddie Pornography'

Albany (RNS) — In a 5-2 decision, the New York State Court of Appeals struck down a state law aimed at preventing the sexual exploitation of children in so-called "kiddie porn" films.

In effect, the court found that depicting naked children engaging in sex acts does not necessarily make a work obscene, and that obscenity was the only basis to interfere with film distribution.

It noted that U.S. Supreme Court rulings have left the judgment of obscenity to community standards, which may vary from one location to another.

The appeals court reversed the rulings of two lower courts and dismissed the indictment of a New York City bookstore owner who had been convicted for selling two films depicting children engaged in sexual activity.

A jury had acquitted the bookstore owner of a charge of promoting an obscene performance by a child but convicted him on a charge of promoting a sex act by a child under a 1977 state law that made it illegal to produce, promote or sell materials that showed children in sexual activity whether the materials had been judged obscene or not.

In its ruling, the high court left standing a section of the law permitting heavier penalties for obscene materials involving children rather than adults.

Court Rules Religion 'Not Primary' for Unification Church

New York (RNS) — An appellate court has ruled that religion isn't the Unification Church's "primary purpose" and the church isn't entitled to tax exemption on three properties here.

However, the five-judge panel declined to hold that the primary purpose of the Unification Church is political, as argued by the New York City Tax Commission.

The Appellate Division of New York State Supreme Court in Manhattan ruled on two issues — whether the primary purposes of the church founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon is religious, and whether three church properties here should be tax-exempt. They voted 3-2 that the church's main purpose isn't religion and 4-1 against allowing tax exemption on the buildings.

"We conclude that political and economic theory is such a substantial part of petitioner's doctrine that it defeats petitioner's claim that its primary purpose is religious," Judge Harold Burns said in the majority decision. "Although religion is one of petitioner's purposes, it is not its primary purpose," he said.

The church is expected to appeal the decision to the State Court of Appeals.

Italian Cardinal Urges Action to End Priestly Celibacy

Bologna, Italy (RNS) — Charging that Roman Catholic Church leadership was out of touch with the times, a retired Italian cardinal has called for lifting the ban on married priests in the Latin rite.

Cardinal Michele Pellegrino, 78, former archbishop of Turin, told an interviewer from the Bologna-based religious journal *Il*

Regno, that he had "openly and without fear" made this views known to Pope John Paul II.

The cardinal is a strong supporter of reforms mandated by Vatican II. He said the Church faced two fundamental options: Either to maintain at any cost the law on celibacy now in force and thus renounce full evangelization, or to favor the full evangelization that is sought through the Eucharist and thus modify the ecclesiastical law.

He feels the Church should choose the second alternative.

Cardinal Pellegrino, who resigned in 1977 for health reasons, was the archbishop of Turin. He criticized unnamed members of the Roman Curia, the Church's central administration, and "certain bishops" saying that they lived "in an artificial world" and didn't feel "the pulse of what people are thinking."

Problems should be solved more through discussion and less by calls to "holy obedience," he said.

Enter Mainstream Of Church Life, Charismatics Urged

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope John Paul II has urged the members of the Catholic Charismatic movement to enter fully into the mainstream of Catholic Church life.

The 523 delegates to the fourth International Leaders Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, held in Rome May 4-9, were received by the pontiff in a special audience in the Vatican Gardens.

Also present were 14 bishops and retired Cardinal Leo Joseph Suenens of Belgium, the pope's liaison to the renewal movement.

"Your choice of Rome as the site of this conference is a special sign of your understanding of the importance of being rooted in that Catholic unity of faith and charity which finds its visible sign in the See of Peter," John Paul II told the delegates.

He cautioned the delegates against "exaggerated concentration upon the extraordinary gifts of the spirit." He also urged them to seek "sound theological formation" and "that integration with the life of the Church which avoids the tendency to form alternative structures."

Italian Saint's Blood Liquefies in Naples ... A Day Late

Naples, Italy (RNS) — A relic of what is said to be congealed blood of St. Januarius, a martyred fourth century bishop, liquefied on Sunday, May 3, a day later than legend says the event is supposed to occur.

The phenomenon is supposed to take place on the first Saturday of every May, marking the day on which the saint's body was transferred to Naples, and each Sept. 19, the feast day of the city's patron saint.

Failure of the substance, which is kept in a vial in the cathedral, to become bubbly red on scheduled is considered a bad omen, according to local tradition.

Thousands of believers anticipating the liquefaction prayed in vain for several hours on Saturday, May 2. They returned to the cathedral on Sunday and after three hours of prayer by Cardinal Corrado Ursi, the prelate announced that the blood had become liquid. The crowd burst into applause.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

God Lives Among His People

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 14/15-21. (R1) Acts 8/5-8, 14-17. (R2) 1 Pt. 3/15-18.

I have often asked the question: "What is the real difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament?" As I see it, the Old Testament gave man the Law — something outside of himself, to measure up to. Of course, man failed. The gift of the New Testament was not a something, but a Someone; not a Law outside us, but a Love placed within us — the Holy Spirit, "I will give you another Paraclete." This Paraclete so changes the heart that the Law can be fulfilled. Man need not fail in achieving his destiny. To ready us for Pentecost, Sunday's readings focus on the Holy Spirit within us.

Joe Garagiola was talking to a sports writer on television's Today Show. The two men were recalling humorous incidents in baseball. Joe told the story of a batter who stepped up to the plate at a crucial point in the game. Being a devout Catholic, the batter drew the sign of the cross with his bat in the dirt near home plate. Catcher Yogi Berra of the opposite team, also a devout Catholic, signaled for a timeout. He reached to the side of the plate and with his

catchers mitt rubbed out the cross traced on the ground. Then he said to the batter, "Why don't we just let God watch this game?"

A 1975 Gallup Poll reported that 94 percent of the American people believe in God. But the question Gallup should have asked was, "Where is God in the American people's lives?" Do they move and live and have their being in God? Is God at the center of their lives, or is He on the fringe, on the outside, just watching?

Sigmund Freud in his Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis wrote: "Darwin has banished God from nature, Marx has banished him from history, and I have banished him from man's inner life." Has he?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his Letters and Papers from Prison, penned shortly before his execution by Nazis, wrote: "I should like to speak of God, not on the

boundaries, but at the center ... I therefore want to start from the premise that God should not be smuggled into some last secret place, but that God ... must be in the middle of things." Bonhoeffer did not believe in a God "out there" or "at the edges," but a God in the middle of things.

After God had redeemed His people from Egyptian slavery, He gave Moses minute instructions on building a Tabernacle. The reason for this construction was "that I may dwell in their midst." This Tabernacle, modelled according to a pattern shown Moses on the mountain, formed a parallelogram (45x15 feet) surrounded by a rectangular courtyard (150x75 feet), enclosed by a fence. Now this is important: God instructed Moses exactly where His dwelling place was to be positioned among the 12 tribes. "The Lord said to Moses ... the Israelites shall camp around the Tabernacle." God was to dwell in the very center of His people — not above them, not outside them, not near them, but in their very midst. The 12 tribes were to pitch their tents thus: three tribes on each side of the quadrilateral surrounding God's dwelling place.

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