

Vatican Says 'No Comment' on Bank Probe Subjects

By Nancy Frazier

Vatican City (NC) — The Vatican has declined comment on press reports that an Italian judge recently issued judicial communiques advising U.S. Archbishop Paul C. Marcinkus and two other officials of the Vatican bank that they are under investigation concerning the troubled Banco Ambrosiano.

"I know nothing about it, but I'll point out anyway that it is the norm of the Holy See to not respond to questions referring to situations having judicial aspects," said Father Pierfranco Pastore, assistant director of the Vatican Press Office, July 29.

A judicial communique is a formal notice that a person may be called for questioning regarding a specific investigation and usually contains accusations made against a person which could lead to the filing of formal charges.

Reports in the Italian press, later supported by Italian diplomatic sources, said the Vatican had refused to accept the formal notices for Archbishop Marcinkus, a 60-year-old native of Cicero, Ill., and president of the Vatican bank; Luigi Mennini, 71, the bank's top lay official; and Pellegrino de Strobel, 70, the bank's chief accountant.

The notices were received

Pope-Lebanon

Continued from Page 1

thought of all those who suffer in Poland, of all those who suffer in the land of Silesia and Zywiec, of those who are deprived of freedom, among whom perhaps there is someone dear to you," he said.

At the end of an hour-long performance of Polish songs and dances, Pope John Paul joined the youth in singing a patriotic tune that began, "Poland is not yet dead as long as we live."

Another group of young

Peace Letter

Continued from Page 1

deterrence is a moral evil that can be tolerated so long as there are serious efforts to achieve global nuclear disarmament. Within the framework of the tolerated deterrence, however, it says it is immoral to use or to threaten to use nuclear weapons against civilian populations or to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons first in response to a conventional attack.

Supporters of U.S. nuclear deterrence policy have argued that that stance, if actually taken up as U.S. policy, would destroy the credibility of U.S. deterrence.

Supporters of unilateral disarmament have argued that anything less amounts to an endorsement of business as usual.

The committee's first draft had drawn about 700 pages of responses by the beginning of August, said officials of the bishops' conference.

The revised plan for

by mail at the Vatican and returned unopened to the Italian embassy to the Holy See, the reports said.

The Vatican contends that the notices should be delivered through diplomatic channels under Italian law, since Archbishop Marcinkus is a non-Italian and a top official of Vatican City, an independent state with full sovereignty, said the reports.

Mennini and De Strobel are Italian citizens who live outside the Vatican.

Archbishop Marcinkus, who holds U.S. and Vatican passports, said July 30, "I am perfectly confident that I have not done anything that can be considered a fraud."

The notices were issued in Milan, Italy, by Judge Pier Luigi Dell'Osso, who is investigating the Banco Ambrosiano for possible fraud regarding \$1.4 billion in dubious loans, which may have been illegal under Italian banking laws.

The Vatican bank, known formally as the Institute for Religious Works, owns 1.58 percent of the Banco Ambrosiano, Italy's largest private bank.

Many news reports about the investigation quoted Italian investigators as saying that the Vatican bank gave the Banco Ambrosiano "letters of patronage" that were used by the Italian bank in making some of the high-risk loans through its

people, students at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, joined the pope at a morning Mass Aug. 1.

Speaking in Flemish, Pope John Paul told the Belgian students to "always believe deeply in the Lord Jesus and in his message."

"Only through a commitment of convinced and personal faith by each one of you can the mission of a Catholic university obtain in today's world a concrete stature," he added.

preparing the pastoral letter adds another dimension to the consultation process.

Originally, the second draft was to be sent only to the nation's bishops for further comment and criticism. Under the new plan it "will also be sent simultaneously to a wide spectrum of theologians and others for their comments," said Abp. Bernardin.

The committee will prepare the second draft on the basis of the responses so far, then send them to the aforementioned groups approximately one month before the November meeting.

Theologians will be asked to respond in writing by Oct. 31. "If possible, a synthesis of their comments and suggestions will be made available at the meeting," Abp. Bernardin said.

After the meeting in November, the committee will develop a third draft in light of the theologians' comments and the bishops' recommendations.

overseas subsidiaries. Many of the loans were reported to have been made to Panamanian finance companies.

These letters of patronage put the Vatican bank's prestige behind the loans, but did not legally require the Vatican bank to guarantee the loans. Some news reports have quoted Italian investigators as saying that the Vatican bank owned or operated the Panamanian companies which received loans.

On June 13, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, papal secretary of state, announced the appointment of a three-man team of independent banking experts to conduct a Vatican investigation of the links between its bank and Banco Ambrosiano, which currently is being administered by government-appointed commissioners.

The Vatican team is expected to give Pope John Paul II a preliminary report

Peace Day Theme Chosen

Vatican City (NC) — Pope John Paul II has chosen "the dialogue of peace: a challenge for our time" as the theme of next year's World Day of Peace, Jan. 1.

"So many tragic events — wars, hostilities — and so many missed opportunities, fruitless negotiations or inconclusive international conferences — all of these point to the urgency of true dialogue as an instrument of peace in our time," a Vatican spokesman said in announcing the theme.

The theme is a continuation of the viewpoint expressed by Paul VI and John Paul II over peace days of the past 15 years.

"Dialogue represents a challenge rather than a sure formula for peace," the Vatican said. It called for a "true dialogue, not the pretense of empty discussions intended only to camouflage selfish intentions and to avoid honest communication, to resolve problems."

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in early August.

Italian government sources said that several top Italian officials met July 29 to discuss the Vatican's refusal to accept the notices.

Il Tempo, a Rome daily newspaper, reported July 30 that consultations between Cardinal Casaroli and Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo were being planned to discuss the matter.

In an unrelated legal action, Mennini, whose title is delegate of the Institute for Religious Works, was ordered July 22 to stand trial on fraudulent bankruptcy charges along with 25 others for the collapse in 1974 of an Italian bank which was part of the financial empire of Italian banker Michele Sindona.

The judge's order, issued after an eight-year investigation into the

operations of Banca Privata Italiana, is similar to an indictment in the United States.

Sindona is currently serving a 25-year jail sentence in the United States after conviction on charges arising from the collapse of Franklin National Bank.

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