

# Vatican Supports Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy

Vienna, Austria (NC) — The Vatican defended the peaceful use of nuclear energy in testimony Sept. 21 at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

At the same time, the Vatican demanded that no effort be spared in guaranteeing stringent safety regulations surrounding its use.

(Three days later, Sept. 24, the United States withdrew its delegation from the meeting of the IAEA because, the State Department said in Washington, the agency had

refused to grant meeting credentials to Israel.)

The statement of the Holy See was read to the meeting in Vienna by Msgr. Mario Peressin, the Vatican's permanent representative to the IAEA.

His testimony also warned against the military uses of nuclear energy and insisted on a nuclear test ban treaty as an essential condition in resolving the threat of atomic disaster.

Enumerating some advantages of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in addition

to the obvious one as an industrial and private power source, Msgr. Peressin listed "the field of food and food conservation, especially through new techniques for plant breeding or through new methods of preservation, (and the) fields of medicine and hydrology."

The Vatican representative said that various specialized agencies of the United Nations had stressed that the economic growth of Third World nations demands an increasing use of nuclear power, and he observed that there are also some countries where renewable resources of energy are not available.

The benefit contained in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be extended to all countries, the Vatican delegate recommended, adding that "people have a just claim to participate in the advantages which human research and ingenuity have brought about in this field."

At the same time, Msgr. Peressin suggested, "care should be taken to implement nuclear energy programs always in connection with other complementary energy programs, so that a balance

may be maintained and overdependence on one single energy source can be avoided."

The Vatican delegate also spoke of the "detrimental consequences which accidents in nuclear power plants and nuclear waste storage may entail."

He observed that "those who hold that nuclear power can be utilized only in a 'zero risk' or 'no risk' situation are perhaps applying an unrealistic standard to endeavors which, like all human efforts, necessarily involve some risk."

He added, however, that "the implications of the use of nuclear energy and the necessity for safety in this field are such that no effort should be spared to maximize safety regulations and minimize risk to the utmost."

"Only a clear and consistent policy that keeps this in mind," said Msgr. Peressin, "will permit a nuclear energy program to be responsibly implemented and will offer to the public the assurance, to which they are entitled, that every possible step has been

taken to ensure the safe functioning of a nuclear plant and the secure disposal of nuclear waste."

The Holy See's delegation, said Msgr. Peressin, was "happy to note the remarkable fact that scientists and engineers have so far been successful in preventing major nuclear accidents and that — as a result of all the ingenuity and care which has been put in these efforts — no fatal accident caused by radiation has to our knowledge occurred in nuclear power plants for civilian uses."

"These efforts," he said, "must be continued, in particular with regard to the long-term storage of radioactive waste, which is creating so many serious apprehensions today."

"Moreover — as the Holy

See has stressed again and again — all care should be taken to fully inform the public on the real relation between nuclear plants and the possible dangers, in order not to turn the issue of nuclear policy into an arcane discipline to which only a few scientists and politicians are privy, thereby creating a climate of unnecessary public fear and mistrust," he said.

Warning against the military use of nuclear energy, Msgr. Peressin noted the capacity of the world to destroy itself and said that "a comprehensive test ban treaty is a condition 'sine qua non' in a situation where the explosive power of all nuclear weapons in the world has reached insane levels."

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

## Wealth Isn't All

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 10/17-30. (R1) Wis. 7/7-11. (R2) Heb. 4/12-13.

Oh, to be young and rich! Young, to have the energy to enjoy life. Rich, to be able to buy the things for a joyful life. Great combo — yes? The man in Sunday's gospel was young and rich, — and, I might add, sad!

There was a girl, Rosemary Russell of Newport Beach, Calif. She was 25 and rich. She was pulling down \$75,000 a year in an investment firm and owned a string of properties — including her own home and a silver Mercedes 450-SL parked in front. Rosemary had a talent for figuring out fine-print escrow clauses, and it was paying off handsomely for her. She had it all, it seemed, both wealth and youth.

Then one day, not too long ago, Rosemary Russell drove her silver Mercedes sport coupe to a Laguna Beach hotel, checked in, and then checked out of life with an overdose of pills. She left a note that said she was ending her life because "I'm so tired of clapping with one hand."

The young man in the Gospel, like Rosemary Russell, was also doubly blessed: young and rich. But he, too, was "tired of clapping with one hand." His life had all the zing of a wet tennis ball. It lacked bounce.

Jesus saw he was trying to get happiness out of wealth. So He told the young man to have a garage sale and "sell what you have and give to the poor." But that was asking too much. So the young man went away sad, to live his life, trying to clap with one hand.

It again seems providential this gospel and the first reading about wisdom should come at the time of the Bishop's Annual Thanks Giving Appeal. Money must be kept in perspective and be balanced by those things money can't buy.

The Bishop's Annual Thanks Giving Appeal is an appeal to wisdom regarding

our money — to use it wisely. We do when we share it with God who has given it to us.

In the movie, "O God," the thought is introduced about why God created the first man and woman without any clothes. The reason was that God knew that as soon as they had clothes, they'd want pockets. And as soon as they had pockets, they'd want money. And as soon as they got money, there'd be trouble. "For the love of money is the root of all evil."

In the Broadway musical, "Hello, Dolly," Dolly Levi tries to break the stranglehold love of money has on Mr. Horace Vandergelder (Horace with all the guilders, old moneybags).

"Money, money, money, money, money," she cries. "It's like the sun we walk under ... it can kill or cure ... we're all fools ... but the surest way to keep us out of harm is to give ... the four or five pleasures that are right in the world ... and that takes a little money ..."

"Money, pardon the expression, is like manure. It's not worth a thing unless it's spread around encouraging young things to grow!"

Money was meant to be our servant, not our master. Whether it is or not depends on our answers to questions like these: "How much will you give to the Bishop's Annual Thanks Giving Appeal?" "How much do you give to your parish each week?"

Many years ago, Rudyard Kipling gave the commencement address at McGill University in Montreal. One thing, he said, that deserves to be remembered, was his warning to the students against an overconcern for money or position or glory. "Someday," he said, "you'll meet a man who cares for none of these things. Then you'll know how poor you are."

Jesus cared for none of these things. Perhaps that was why the rich man was so sad when he walked away from Jesus. He saw how "poor" he was contrasted with the life of Jesus.

## Pope to Drum out Mafiosi? Vatican Keeping Silence

Vatican City — The Vatican has refused to comment on widespread reports in the Italian press that Pope John Paul II is considering excommunicating members of the Mafia during his scheduled visit to Palermo, Sicily, in November.

The excommunication proposal reportedly came from Cardinal Salvatore Pappalardo of Palermo after the Sept. 3 murders of police Gen. Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, Italy's top anti-Mafia specialist; his wife, Emanuela, and a police bodyguard.

Vatican sources said the pope might announce during his visit that Mafia members come under excommunication sanctions in the new Code of Canon Law, which he is expected to issue shortly after the visit to Palermo.

Excommunication is the most serious of all Church penalties, in which a Catholic is excluded from the communion of the faithful, especially reception of the sacraments, for committing

## School Prayer Issue Dead

Washington — It took almost a dozen roll-call votes and days of sometimes acrimonious discussion, but the Senate Sept. 23 ended its month-long abortion and school prayer debate.

A week after killing an abortion measure proposed by Sen. Jesse Helms, the Senate did the same to an equally controversial Helms proposal that would have removed federal court jurisdiction in school prayer cases. The key vote in killing the proposal was 51-48.

Sen. Orrin Hatch had earlier withdrawn his proposed Constitutional Amendment which would have restricted abortions. He plans to re-submit it next year.

certain sins specified in canon law.

In the Campania region of Italy (Naples), where the Mafia is known as the Camorra, the regional bishops have issued guidelines on the Mafia which fall short of excommunication but which deprive them of certain sacramental signs. Camorra members cannot serve as godparents for baptisms or receive Catholic funerals.

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