

Editorials

Waiting for You, 3 Tons of TNT

A message from those that know:

"Science can offer the world no real defense against the consequences of nuclear war."

A quote from some pacifist or religious purist?

Not at all. It is part of a declaration made by an assembly of presidents of scientific academies and other scientists from 31 nations convened in the Vatican by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

"There are now some 50,000 nuclear weapons some of which have yields a thousand times greater than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima," the scientists declared. The total explosive of these weapons is equivalent to a million Hiroshima bombs, which corresponds to a yield of some three tons of TNT for every person on earth. Yet these stockpiles continue to grow.

The scientists are not hopeless. "The catastrophe of nuclear war can and must be prevented."

The declaration lists these steps toward a world free of nuclear menace:

- Nuclear weapons are fundamentally different from conventional weapons. They must not be regarded as acceptable instruments of warfare. Nuclear warfare would be a crime against humanity.

- It is of utmost importance that there be no armed conflict between nuclear powers because of the danger that nuclear weapons would be used.

- The use of force anywhere as a method of settling international conflicts entails the risk of military confrontation of nuclear weapons.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons to additional countries seriously increases the risk of military confrontation of nuclear powers.

- The current arms race increases the risk of nuclear war. The race must be stopped, the development of new more destructive weapons must be curbed, and nuclear forces must be reduced, with the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament. The sole purpose of nuclear weapons, as long as they exist, must be to deter nuclear war.

The scientists appealed to national leaders, to other scientists, to religious leaders and to people everywhere.

World leaders will not hear; religious leaders are not heard; scientists listen to a different drummer. That leaves people everywhere. Will they hear? Or would individuals rather await the sound of their own personal three tons of TNT?

Ignoble

Bravo to Il Vaticano!

The Roman Observer, the official newspaper of the Holy See, hit the nail, or the bigot, when it called sperm banks seeking to produce new geniuses from Nobel prize winners "racist."

The aim, the Observer editorial said, is to "give birth to geniuses and to select 'supermen and superwomen.'"

That terminology reminds of repulsive Nazi attempts along the same lines.

That geniuses or athletic champions should not be required to participate in such a programmed way, that women should not be subject to such a mechanical role and the absence of love were all mentioned as detriments.

The main objection, however, remains the innate bigotry evident in the entire scheme.

The Church Keeps Poland's Hope Alive

Vatican City (NC) — Here are excerpts from an NC News translation of the Italian text distributed by the Vatican of Pope John Paul II's Polish-language talk to Polish bishops making their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican Oct. 11. The group was led by Cardinal Franciszek Macharski of Cracow:

I heartily desire that our meeting today be a witness to the profound fraternal link and the common pastoral concern for the People of God in our homeland. May it be the expression of this sharing in the sacred pastoral office, whose principal duty is concern for individual and for all churches.



The priest is "taken from among men and constituted for men." The bishop too. This his responsibility regards not only the destinies of the church, but also that of the nation, with whom the church has always been united in the vicissitudes of life.

Similarly, Polish society has always looked to the church as fiduciary of its hopes. The church in fact defended the legitimate national and civil rights. For love of the homeland, the church rose up in defense of freedom and of the dignity of Poland, of its sovereignty and independence, of legality and order. The church held in high consideration the sacrifice of lives spent in service of the homeland and the nation. The church confronted outrage, knowledgeably safeguarded the national traditions and carefully guarded the heritage of Christian culture. It protected against the oppression of souls and intellects, defended against the coercion of consciences, assured the sense of freedom of spirit, of that interior freedom which at any time is for man and for the Christian the most important thing.

I hope you, dear brothers, and the flock entrusted to you, may never lose this freedom of spirit, which Christ made a gift to all the sons of God.

That is valid also for the present time. Recent years have inspired a movement of social and moral rebirth, founded on the legitimate aspiration to consolidate the dignity of man and of human work; a movement which millions of Poles have linked and link to the hope of a better and more secure tomorrow in Poland. And it is of capital importance that the contents and essential values of this renewal are not deleted from the Polish reality.

"With you and many others, I live the current situation in Poland." I said to an international group of leaders of union federations during a special audience Feb. 9 of this year. With you I share the conviction that the restoration of effective and total respect for the rights of workers, and especially of the right to an already created and legalized union, constitutes the only way out of this difficult situation.

“The church is not yet fully alive . . . unless there exists a laity worthy of the name working among the hierarchy.”

... Work must be recognized as the key to life in society, work freely assumed and not imposed by force, work with its fatigue but also with its capacity to make man free and make him the true builder of society.

It is reason for great joy that our brothers and sisters in Poland, today in the crucible of personal trials and in the torment of material difficulties, feel closer to one another, ready to run to assist, more deeply sensitive to the needs of others. This continuous manifestation of human benevolence and of solidarity has a social and moral eloquence. A new spiritual link is created, in fact, uniting the sons of the same nation. With faithful hope we must look to the future, while society demonstrates an ever greater will to defend the suffering and humiliated oppressed. The words of Christ come to mind here: "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me."

In the name of these brothers of Christ, in the name of all Poles interned and incarcerated and of their anguished families, in the name of the numerous families vexed by multiple difficulties, I give you a cordial "Bog zaptac" for the pastoral care, both moral and material, that the needy must not lack in your communities. Thanks too for the reciprocal charity and for your humanitarian aid coming from other countries and other nations. I address in this place words of particular thanks and appreciation to the president and members of the charitable commission of the episcopacy, as well as to all the committees of assistance to persons deprived of freedom and of their families, for the various charitable activities carried out at the central, diocesan and parish level.

The Second Vatican Council could not help but emphasize that in the life of the particular church, territorial extension and the number of faithful have an important role. It is obvious that the territory of each diocese must be compact in its extension. The number of its inhabitants must be, generally, such that the bishop can fulfill all the actions strictly linked to his triple pastoral ministry and know all his priests. Religious and laity who make up the administration of the diocese.

I say this referring first of all to a question already confronted in the course of preceding meetings. In fact the echo has not yet faded of the diocesan celebrations this year in Slupsk, Koszalin, Kolobrzek, Szczecin, Gorzow and Opole, linked to the important decisions adopted by Paul VI. Ten years ago, by virtue of the bull, "Episcoporum Poloniae Coeptus" (Assembly of the Bishops of Poland), of June 28, 1972, in the central

and western lands were erected the new dioceses of Opole, Gorzow, Szczecin-Kamien and Koszalin-Kolobrzek. At the same time, through the inclusion or separation of these new dioceses were reorganized the metropolitans of Wroclaw, Gniezno and also Warsaw, because in this latter was included the diocese of Warmia.

This 10th anniversary of the erection, or rather the restoration, in some cases, of the dioceses of the ancient land of the plasts, reanimates, in a certain sense, and increases our common concern for the good of the people of God in all of Poland, whose number of inhabitants has grown in recent years by several million. The progressive social and economic changes, the development of the cities and hamlets, the formation of new industrial, cultural and scientific centers — all this gives rise to very new pastoral problems which the church seeks to deal with. Therefore in consequence is born the need for erection of parishes and catechetical centers, and the construction of churches. I know that these problems form the incessant object of your concern.

The organizational structures of the local church are important, but much more important is the living man, redeemed in the blood of Christ, member of the People of God: lay and Religious.

The church is not yet fully alive, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ among men, unless there exists a laity worthy of the name working along with the hierarchy. For the Gospel cannot be deeply imprinted on the talents, life and works of any people without the active presence of laymen . . . Their main duty, whether they are men or women, is the witness which they are bound to bear to Christ by their life and works in the home, in their social group and in their own professional circle. For in them there must appear the new man created according to God in justice and true holiness. But they must give expression to this newness of life in the social and cultural framework of their own homeland, according to their own national traditions. They must be acquainted with this culture. They must heal it and preserve it. They must develop it in accordance with modern conditions, and finally perfect it in Christ. ("Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church," "Ad Gentes," 21.)

I cite this passage of the council because it expresses the scope of the proposals and initiatives which are at the origin of the foundation of the council for culture, and recalling the coordination of those efforts which aim for the further development of of Christian culture in Poland.