

World, Nation, People . . . in Brief

Provided by NC News Service

World

Churches May Close

Jerusalem — Armenian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox churches in Jerusalem may close during Christmas to protest Israel's decision not to renew the residence visa of Armenian Archbishop Karekian Kazandjian, chief assistant to Armenian Patriarch Jeghishe Derdrian of Jerusalem, according to the Jerusalem daily, Yedioth Ahranot. The newspaper said on Nov. 17, however, that no final decision had been made. Rumors that the churches would close began circulating after the Israeli government announced Nov. 3 that it would not renew the archbishop's visa. Though Israeli officials did not give reasons for the decision, they implied that security issues were involved. Armenian church sources say that the move is part of a coordinated Israeli campaign to harrass the 3,000-member Armenian Orthodox community. A Roman Catholic Church official said the whole situation has been blown "completely out of proportion."

Guerrillas Release Prelate

Geneva, Switzerland — Angolan guerrillas have released Archbishop Alexandre do Nascimento of Lubango, Angola, the International Red Cross said Nov. 17. UNITA, a guerrilla group opposed to Angola's Marxist government, had captured the archbishop Oct. 15, and both Pope John Paul II and the Angolan Bishops' Conference had called for his release. Freed Nov. 16 "somewhere in Angola," Archbishop do Nascimento spent the night in Pretoria, South Africa, in care of a Red Cross delegation, said Nicholas Sommer, a Red Cross spokesman at the organization's Geneva headquarters. Sommers did not say whether any of the five nuns and a group of catechists who were kidnaped at about the same time as the archbishop have been released.

Nation

Bishop Fights Missiles

Cheyenne, Wyo. — Bishop Joseph Hart of Cheyenne issued a pastoral letter calling the MX missile system "morally indefensible." The letter, released Nov. 9, said Wyoming's people must "say 'no' to this system" and call for a "halt to arms escalation now." Bishop Hart released his pastoral because of the "distinct possibility that a decision may soon be made to station the MX in Wyoming." In the letter the bishop described nuclear arms escalation as a threat "unlike any we have ever known," a threat "that could obliterate life."

K of C Breakfast Prevails

Charleston, S.C. — The Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Assembly 704, serving the Charleston area, held its annual Mass and breakfast for a racially integrated group of police and fire department officers a few weeks after the event was embroiled in public debate over whether some K of C members were racist. Father St. John E. Patat, Assembly 704 chaplain, celebrated the Mass at Blessed Sacrament parish, where he is pastor. In October the Charleston diocese's vicar general, Father Thomas Duffy, had alleged that the Knights had moved the event from his parish, Sacred Heart, where it had been held for years before he became pastor there last summer, because of his backing for racial integration. The Knights denied that Father Duffy's views on integration had anything to do with moving the event.

Policy Change Urged

Washington — United States policy toward Central America, especially "all efforts to destabilize Nicaragua," should be changed, according to Pax Christi USA, a branch of the international Catholic peace movement. Pax Christi asked the U.S. to "renounce the application of military solutions to social, economic and political problems throughout Central America." Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit, president of Pax Christi USA, signed the letter, which also asked for "high level negotiations with Nicaragua and Honduras aimed at reducing the tension" caused by the belief of the Nicaraguan officials that the U.S. is aiding guerrillas in Honduras to destabilize the Nicaraguan government. The U.S. government has denied Nicaraguan charges it seeks destabilization.

People

Father Byron Installed

Washington — "Just as a person who ignores his or her creator is a sad creation . . . so a university without a conscious opening to the creator of all truth and beauty is an incomplete university," Jesuit Father William J. Byron said Nov. 18 at his inauguration as 12th president of the Catholic University of America. Father Byron, 55, is an economist who has served as president of the University of Scranton and dean at Loyola University in New Orleans.

Focus on Today's World



► Carleen and Gary McElrath give their 16-month-old daughter Stephanie a big hug at the home of Carleen's parents in Charleroi, Pa. The baby was born prematurely in North Miami Beach, Fla., after five and one-half months of Carleen's pregnancy and weighed only one pound, 11 ounces. (NC photo)



▲ Father George L. Frappler, Providence diocesan pro-life coordinator, and John Roth, head of the First Congregational District Action Committee, a Rhode Island pro-life group, look over nearly 75,000 life roll cards signed recently throughout Providence parishes. (NC photo)



▲ Guatemalan refugees, carrying their meager belongings on their backs, wade through a stream to arrive at a refugee camp near the Mexico-Guatemala border in Mexico's southernmost Chiapas Province. They arrive daily to escape the oppression and threats of death in their native land. (NC photo)

the Saints *by Luke*

ST. JOHN DAMASCENE



BORN IN 675 OF A WEALTHY CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN DAMASCUS, JOHN SPENT ALL HIS LIFE UNDER MOHAMMEDAN RULE. HE WAS EDUCATED BY A BRILLIANT MONK NAMED COSMAS.

IN 726, WHEN EMPEROR LEO THE ISAURIAN ISSUED HIS FIRST EDICT PROHIBITING THE VENERATION OF IMAGES, JOHN DEFENDED THE PRACTICE AND SOON BECAME A LEADING CHAMPION OF THE CATHOLIC POSITION. HE AROUSED THE BITTER ENMITY OF THE BYZANTINE EMPERORS.

JOHN BECAME A MONK AT ST. SABAS' "LAURA" OUTSIDE JERUSALEM. HE WAS DENOUNCED AT A PSEUDOSYNOD IN CONSTANTINOPLE BY ICONOCLAST EMPEROR CONSTANTINE COPRONOMUS, BUT WAS ORDAINED BY PATRIARCH JOHN V.

JOHN SOON RETURNED TO THE MONASTERY AND LED THE DEFENDERS OF ORTHODOXY AND EXPONDERS OF THE CATHOLIC POSITION IN THE ICONOCLASM CONTROVERSY. HIS WRITINGS, ESPECIALLY HIS "DE FIDE ORTHODOXA," ONE OF HIS MOST NOTABLE THEOLOGICAL WORKS HAVE HAD GREAT INFLUENCE ON THEOLOGIANS OF BOTH EAST AND WEST.

HE ALSO WROTE POETRY AND SOME OF HIS POEMS ARE USED IN THE GREEK LITURGY. THE ELEGANCE OF HIS GREEK CAUSED HIM TO BE CALLED CHRYSORRHOAS (GOLD-POURING).

HE DIED AT SABAS, IN EARLY DECEMBER, 749, THE LAST OF THE GREEK FATHERS, AND WAS MADE A DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH BY POPE LEO XIII IN 1890. HIS FEAST IS DEC. 4.

On The Inside

Calendar	8
Chronistics	10
Child	12
Classified	15
Caddy	6
Editorial	13
Hohman	5
Liturgy	6
Opinion	13
Parish News	8
People and Events	2
Pope	10
Rap Around	11
Reedy	15
Shannon	14

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