

Deterrence Seen as Biggest Issue

By Jim Lackey

Washington (NC) — Questions surrounding the paradoxical issue of nuclear deterrence seem to have become perhaps the biggest single block facing the bishops as they consider their proposed pastoral letter on war and peace.

Time and time again during the bishops' discussion at their annual meeting in Washington Nov. 15-18 of the second draft of their pastoral letter, the possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence purposes was raised as a major concern. Even the chairman of the committee drafting the pastoral, Archbishop Joseph

L. Bernardin of Chicago, admitted that the committee was not completely satisfied with its formulations on deterrence policy.

The Reagan administration also seemed to place deterrence at the top of the list of issues on which it was seeking to influence the bishops. Its formal response to the second draft of the pastoral, sent to the bishops during their meeting in Washington, maintained that its deterrence policy fit Pope John Paul II's characterization of deterrence as "morally acceptable" as long as deterrence is used as a step toward progressive disarmament.

The deterrence section of

the bishops' proposed pastoral already has been revised extensively from the first draft. Hinged at least in part on that pastoral statement, read at the United Nations last summer by the papal secretary of state, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the second draft of the pastoral notes that deterrence is a paradox because it includes a number of negative dimensions.

These include such "sinful situations" as the intention to use nuclear weapons to deter an attack, the human consequences if deterrence fails, the political relationship of distrust which sustains deterrence, and the diversion of resources to weapons of deterrence.

Despite those negative elements, the second draft of the pastoral says possession of nuclear weapons may still be acceptable as long as its purpose is to prevent the use of nuclear weapons and as long as negotiations proceed to meaningful and continuing reductions in nuclear stockpiles.

But the draft pastoral also notes that deterrence policies need to be continually rethought, particularly since the strategic balance is so fragile that any additions to the nuclear arsenal in the name of deterrence might in fact make the control of nuclear arms less likely.

Discussions among the bishops showed that many feel the proposed pastoral's treatment of deterrence still is not on the right track.

Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia said that, with all due deference to the pope he would prefer to see deterrence described as tolerable rather than acceptable. Tolerable, he said, means living with something that is less than satisfactory only because of greater good that can be achieved.

Others noted the inconsistency of supporting a general policy of deterrence even though it has morally unacceptable elements. "We do not want to find ourselves in the position of at least seeming to support a good end through a means whose use we consider immoral," said Archbishop James A. Hickey of Washington.

Still others, such as Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco and Bishop Raymond A. Lucker of New Ulm, Minn., said the document needs more precise criteria for judging the acceptability of a deterrence policy. Archbishop Quinn said the deterrence of the MX missile system has been seriously questioned and remarked, "I believe we should strengthen our position against destabilizing steps in the nuclear race by clearly opposing the MX deployment."

Bishop Lucker added that tolerance of nuclear weapons was a thin thread on which to hang other conclusions in the document and said the notion of deterrence has been the justification for the production of more and more nuclear weapons.

Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle, meanwhile, argued that the pastoral should flatly say that the strategy of deterrence is a root cause of the arms race.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Advent: A Time To Repent

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 3/1-6. (R1) Bar. 5/1-9. (R2) Phil. 1/4-6, 8-11.

In Scriptures there are three great exoduses: two from political slavery, one from spiritual slavery. The first two comprised the exoduses from Egypt and then from Babylon. The Exodus from Babylon was prepared for by a prophet called "Second-Isaiah." He was given that name because no one knows his real name, and because he not only spoke in the spirit of the first Isaiah (c. 700 B.C.), but also showed clearly what so many of the prophecies of first Isaiah meant.

This Second-Isaiah spoke to the Jewish exiles in Babylon around 548 B.C. What he said can be found in chapters 40 to 55 in the Book of Isaiah. He told the exiles to get ready for a new exodus — a "going out" of Babylon to their homes in Jerusalem. He predicted that this exodus from Babylon would be more glorious than the going out of Egypt by their forefathers, for this exodus would be bloodless and sponsored by a mighty monarch, Cyrus the Great himself.

As Second-Isaiah looked back to the first exodus, so the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark and Luke, looked back to this second exodus when writing of the beginning of Jesus' public life. They pictured John the Baptist as another Second-Isaiah. In fact they put the very words of the prophet in John's mouth: "A voice crying 'make ready the way of the Lord.'" They saw John as foretelling another exodus, even greater than the Babylonian one, for it would be a spiritual liberation — a baptism of repentance leading to the forgiveness of sin." Then, too, his message would be not just to God's chosen people, but to "all mankind." They saw John as one who readies the world to see "the salvation of God" — namely, Jesus Christ!

And the preparation John proclaimed? It was "a

baptism of repentance." Repentance (metanoia) became a key word in the preparation for the Kingdom. Jesus began His own preaching by proclaiming repentance. On their first mission, the Twelve preached the need of repentance. At Pentecost, Peter called the crowd to repent and be baptized.

Advent is a time of coming, of Christ's coming; repentance is our response, our coming to Christ, to His house, to His ways, to Him. In Advent it is meant to be a cheerful call. John is a messenger of love!

Later on, people asked John what they must do. Directly and simply, he said share your goods with the needy, be honest and considerate in your dealings with others, and be content with your salaries. Then He promised, you can expect a great and wonderful transformation in the world and in life from the Jesus who is to come.

As Christmas nears, the mails are glutted with appeals to share with the needy: appeals for the starving, the refugees, the blind, the crippled, the heart fund, cancer fund, kidney fund, and on and on. And to make it worse, advertising firms have been hired to do the appeals so that one feels like a despicable rascal if one does not respond to them all.

Advertising works even greater havoc on our kids. In a profit economy, useless, gimmicky things, unnecessary luxuries are produced and then marketed by high pressure advertising. The kids are victims. They believe they need these things and they begin to think parents unloving who do not provide them.

The Sunday readings tell us not to feel helpless and frustrated in view of this barrage. God is all-powerful. If we respond to the gift already given us — the call to repentance — our whole society can be transformed. The institutionalized greed and competition running rampant and oppressing us can be changed. And this will happen if we make ready the way of the Lord!

Business in Diocese



DR. TONERY

Dr. James T. Tonery of Henrietta was honored recently as a Fellow in the International College of Dentists at the 123rd annual meeting of the American Dental Association in Las Vegas.

Dr. Tonery was cited for "outstanding and meritorious contributions to the art and science of dentistry."

Dr. Tonery, who is a Diplomat of the American Board of Orthodontics, is past president of the Monroe County Dental Society and past chairman of the Dental Department at St. Mary's Hospital.

Dr. Tonery also served on the advisory council for McQuaid Jesuit High School, and is presently serving on the Board of "Voices" at Monroe Developmental Center, the Committee on the Handicapped for the School of Industry, and the parish council at Good Shepherd Church, Henrietta.

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