

World, Nation, People... in Brief

Provided by National Catholic News Service

World

Irish Bombing 'Horrifying'

Londonderry, Northern Ireland — Cardinal Thomas O'Fiach of Armagh and Bishop Edward Daly of Derry have expressed horror at the bombing of a bar frequented by British soldiers in a village near Londonderry. The explosion on the night of Dec. 6 at the Droppin Well Bar and Disco in Ballykelly killed 16 people and injured 66. Bishop Daly called it a "horrifying illustration of the inhuman capacity of those who placed this bomb." Cardinal O'Fiach said, "This was not an act of war. This was an act of willful murder. How can anyone with a shred of humanity plant a bomb where it will cause the maximum number of deaths?"

Pope: Extend Women's Role

Vatican City — The role of women in today's society ought to be a "more extensive and incisive one," Pope John Paul II told 350 delegates to a national convention of the Italian Feminine Center. The pope told each delegate that her presence within society should be that of "a woman, with the contribution of the particular values of her femininity and without responding less to the responsibilities proper to her own conjugal and family vocation."

British Abortions Still Liberal

London — An effort to tighten a 1967 British law allowing abortions was defeated Dec. 6 in the House of Lords. The proposed changes would have required that the risk to the mother's life in continuing a pregnancy must be serious and substantially greater than the risk of having an abortion. The change in wording was supported by several Anglican bishops but was defeated 57-42.

Philippines Charge Priests

Manila, Philippines — Immaculate Conception Fathers Theo Bandsma, 60, and Herman Sanderink, 57, two Dutch priests working in the Philippines, face subversion charges for the possession of Communist literature, a Defense Ministry spokesman said Dec. 3. He said that preliminary investigations indicated that sufficient evidence existed against the two priests, who were arrested Aug. 8 along with a student and two other Church workers. The superior of the congregation in the Philippines, Father Ernesto Amigleio, said, "The truth of the matter is that these materials were planted."

Nation

Praying Incognito

Milwaukee — Bandannas, straw hats and dark glasses dramatically hid from public view the faces of two Salvadoran and one Guatemalan illegal refugees as they participated in an interfaith prayer vigil in St. John the Evangelist Cathedral. The vigil, which took place Dec. 2, inaugurated the public sanctuary program in the Milwaukee Archdiocese. Attending the service was Archbishop Rembert Weakland who said he supports parishes providing sanctuary to illegal Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees.

Texas Bishops Tried, Failed

Austin, Texas — The Texas Catholic Conference tried unsuccessfully to stop the Dec. 7 execution of convicted murderer Charles Brooks Jr., the sixth person to be executed in the United States since capital punishment was resumed in 1977. Of the six, Brooks, 40, was only the second to die against his own wishes, the first to be executed in Texas, the first black to be executed and the first to be killed by lethal injection — a method that has provoked a separate moral controversy.

Amnesty Seen Necessary

Washington — In a letter to members of the House of Representatives, the general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference, Msgr. Daniel Hoyer, said that if an amnesty provision for illegal aliens were removed from the proposed comprehensive immigration bill, while sanctions against employers who hire were retained, the USCC "could no longer support" the bill. If the bill is passed, employers who knowingly hire illegal workers could be fined, and without amnesty (or legalization) procedures, many illegal aliens would be unable to find work.

Blackmun: Been Called Names

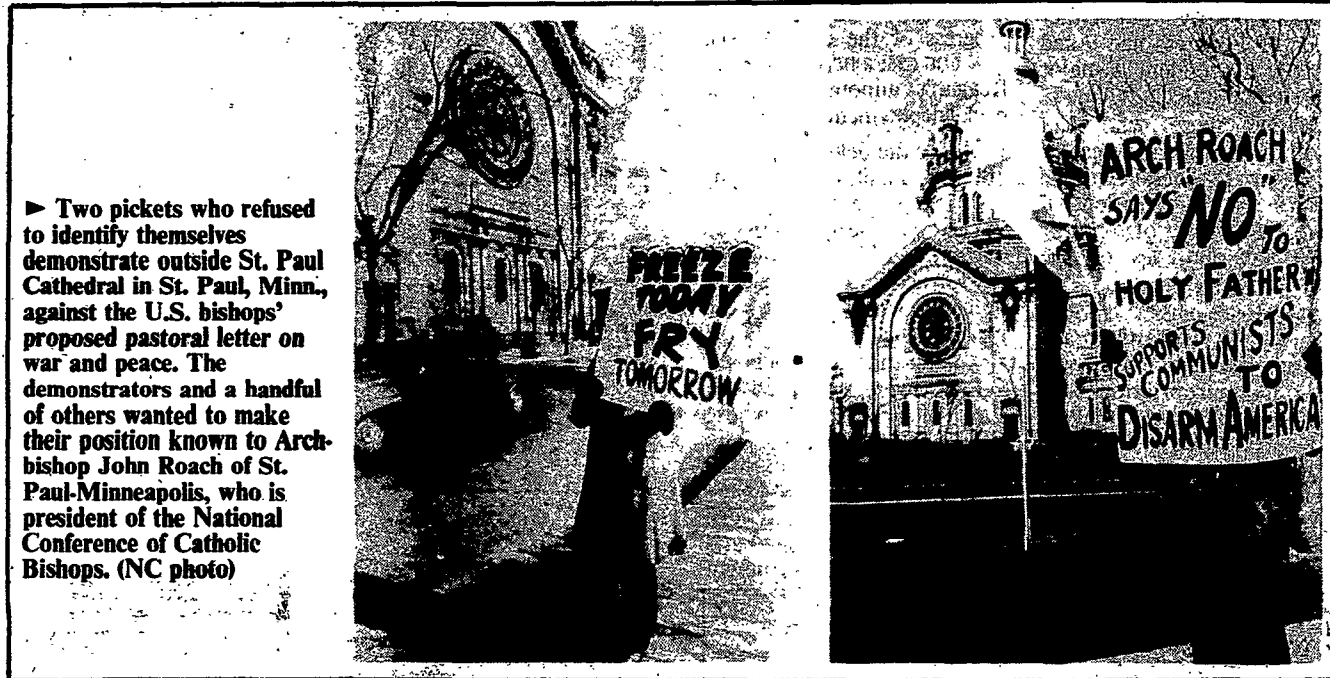
Washington — Justice Harry A. Blackmun, author of the Supreme Court's 1973 decision overturning most state restrictions on abortion, said letter-writers reacted by calling him a murderer, butcher and even Pontius Pilate.

In an interview on Cable News Network, Blackmun said of the mass of letters that followed the abortion ruling, "I think you can think of any name to call someone and I have been called it, butcher of Dachau, murderer, Pontius Pilate, King Herod — you name it." He said that immediately after the abortion decision, the court had received more mail than at any time in history. About 75 percent of the mail criticized the decision, he added. He added that he agonized over the decision.

Focus on Today's World



Participants in the annual Doo-Dah Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on Nov. 28 — usually a march dedicated to spoofing the city's annual Rose Bowl parade — poke fun at the Reagan administration's proposal for clustering MX missiles in Wyoming, by suggesting their backyards as alternate sites. The parade, which began six years ago, featured nearly 100 different groups this year and attracted more than 40,000 spectators.



Two pickets who refused to identify themselves demonstrate outside St. Paul Cathedral in St. Paul, Minn., against the U.S. bishops' proposed pastoral letter on war and peace. The demonstrators and a handful of others wanted to make their position known to Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis, who is president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (NC photo)

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Nearly 100 people march with candles from the Federal Building in Philadelphia to a local church in remembrance of the four American missionaries killed in El Salvador two years ago. (NC photo)



Wearing a broad brimmed hat and a bandanna over his face to protect his identity, one of three refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala holds a candle during an interfaith service at Milwaukee's Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Catholic parishes in Milwaukee and Racine, Wis., and a Presbyterian church in Wayzata, Minn., have offered refuge to the three illegal aliens as part of an underground railroad from Central America. (NC photo)