

World, Nation, People . . . in Brief

Provided by NC News Service

World

Pope Praises Lithuanians

Vatican City — Pope John Paul II praised "the admirable vitality" of the Lithuanian Catholic Church and urged the Soviet Union to give its members "full freedom of conscience and of religion, in all its individual and communitarian aspects." In an April 22 Latin-language talk to four Lithuanian bishops, the pope summarized the "sorrows and joys" of the church in Lithuania. It was the first time since Lithuania became part of the Soviet Union that communist officials had allowed the bishops to come to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses. Among the problems facing the Lithuanian church, Pope John Paul cited the shortage of priests, restrictions on the ability of parents to "freely transmit the gift of faith to their children," and erosion of the sanctity of marriage. The once independent nation has been a constituent republic of the Soviet Union since World War II, and Catholics there have suffered decades of harsh persecution.

Focus on Today's World



A smiling Lech Walesa talks to a doctor at the clinic in Gdansk, Poland, where he took his physical examination before returning to his old job at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. The former Solidarity leader will be working again as an electrician after permission was granted by government officials. (NC Photo)

Nation

Jews Push N-Freeze

Washington — The chief American agency of Reform Judaism launched a campaign April 25 to mobilize Jewish support for a nuclear arms freeze. At a press conference in Washington the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which represents 760 Reform synagogues in the United States and Canada, announced publication of a 307-page educational manual titled, "Preventing the Nuclear Holocaust — A Jewish Response." Albert Vorspan, vice president of the union and director of its Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, credited the U.S. Catholic bishops with providing "inspiration and energy" for the program. Many Catholic bishops have spoken out individually on the arms race and U.S. deterrence policy in the past two years, and the development of a proposed national pastoral letter on war and peace has been a central topic of debate in the Catholic Church over the past year. "Just as the bishops' statements were a motivational force within the Catholic community, so do we believe that this manual will help mobilize the Jewish community to participate actively" in the public debate, said Vorspan.



Father Juan Fernandez Krohn, illicitly ordained Spanish priest accused of trying to assassinate Pope John Paul II at Fatima, makes a sign of victory as he leaves a courtroom in Vila Nova de Ourem, Portugal. He was scheduled to be sentenced May 2. During the final moments of his trial he tried to burn a photograph of the pope, but court officials snatched the picture from the priest's hands before he could touch a match to it. (NC Photo)



Archbishop Helder Camara of Olinda and Recife, Brazil, joins in song with people of South Bronx on a visit to St. Athanasius Church in New York City. The archbishop was on a trip scheduled to take him to several U.S. cities as well as Paris, Brussels and Geneva. (NC Photo)

Death Stand Reaffirmed

Washington — Citing medical, moral and legal disagreements over the value of such legislation, the U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities reaffirmed its opposition to "definition of death" laws. Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York, chairman of the committee, sent a letter in April to all U.S. bishops saying that "a compelling need for such legislation has still not been demonstrated." The committee first expressed its opposition to "definition of death" laws in 1977. More than half the states have enacted some form of legislation equating death with "brain death," and in other states courts have approved the legal concept of brain death. But existing statutes and court rulings differ among themselves. The bishops' committee letter said there are fears that some doctors may want to use "brain death" as a medical and legal fiction to obtain transplants from comatose but still-living patients.

Donations Received

Albany — Catholic and Catholic-affiliated agencies were among 33 social service and community organizations that received donations from a tax-resistance fund in Albany. On April 14, the day before the deadline for filing tax returns, the Military Tax Resistance and Alternative Fund distributed more than \$5,500, in checks ranging from \$50 to \$600, to the non-profit organizations. The money came from people who, for reasons of conscience, refused to pay the portion of their federal income taxes that they estimated would be used for military purposes. At least five of the recipients were agencies affiliated with the Diocese of Albany.

People

Sister Honored

Washington — When Sister Madeline Chorman, 72, was named one of six Outstanding Peace Corps Volunteers in a White House ceremony, she told President Reagan she needed more flour to feed Ghanaians expelled from Nigeria. Within hours Life Flour Milling Limited in Nigeria was making plans through the Nigerian embassy to send Sister Chorman 30 100-pound bags of flour via diplomatic mail, according to John Nicholson, Peace Corps director of communications. Sister Chorman, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in Stella Niagara, N.Y., has served 10 years with the Peace Corps. She returned to the United States to receive her award, which Reagan presented April 18 to launch National Volunteer Week.

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the Saints *by Luke*

ST. BENEDICT II



BENEDICT, BORN IN ROME, WAS ACTIVE IN CHURCH AFFAIRS AS A YOUTH AND WAS A STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE AND SACRED MUSIC. HE WENT ON TO SUCCEED ST. LEO II AS POPE IN 683, BUT HIS CONSECRATION WAS DELAYED NEARLY A YEAR AWAITING THE EMPEROR'S CONFIRMATION. DURING HIS PONTIFICATE, HE SECURED A DECREE FROM EMPEROR CONSTANTINE THE BEARDED PERMITTING THE EXARCH OF RAVENNA TO CONFIRM PAPAL ELECTIONS, THUS ELIMINATING THE LONG DELAYS. BENEDICT WAS HIGHLY REGARDED BY CONSTANTINE, WHO SENT HIM LOCKS OF HIS SONS' HAIR AS A SIGN THAT THEY WERE THE POPE'S SPIRITUAL SONS. BENEDICT WAS SUCCESSFUL IN BRINGING BACK TO ORTHODOXY MACARIUS, EX-PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH, FROM HIS MONOTHELITISM AND HE RESTORED SEVERAL ROMAN CHURCHES. HE DIED ON MAY 8, 685, IN ROME, AND WAS NAMED PATRON OF EUROPE BY POPE PAUL VI IN 1964. HIS FEAST IS MAY 8.

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