



# Bishops Practical In Peace

By Jim Lackey

WASHINGTON (NC) — Though many of its pages are devoted to weighty public policy issues the U.S. bishops' new war and peace pastoral also offers Catholics what the bishops consider to be "practical" suggestions in the effort to shape a peaceful world.

Perhaps the most attention has been focused on the bishops' proposal that Catholics voluntarily choose to return to the tradition of fast and abstinence on Fridays. But the pastoral also offers several other ideas that the bishops believe could have an immediate impact in the search for peace, including petitions for peace during the general intercessions of every Mass and greater devotion to prayer, penance and almsgiving for peace.

The suggestion that Catholics, in effect, "fast for peace" comes near the end of the 160-page final document in a section outlining "elements of a pastoral response" by the church to the challenges of peace.

The bishops first note that penance is a necessary complement to prayer, then commit themselves to fast and abstinence each Friday "as a tangible sign of our need and desire to do penance...for the cause of peace." They then call on Catholics to join in that same spirit by voluntarily "eating less food and by abstaining from meat" on Fridays.

During discussion of the issue at the bishops' meeting in Chicago Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago, chairman of the war and peace committee, stressed that the proposal carried no obligation for Catholics but instead was "basically a call."

Fridays should not be limited to mere fast and abstinence, the bishops say.



"Every Friday should be a day significantly devoted to prayer, penance and almsgiving for peace," the pastoral remarks, noting that Friday penance was once a traditional practice well observed in the U.S. church.

"The present nuclear arms race has distracted us from the words of the prophets, has turned us from peacemaking and has focused our attention on a nuclear build-up leading to annihilation," the pastoral adds. "We are called to turn back from this evil...and turn instead in prayer and penance toward God, toward our neighbor and toward the building of a peaceful world."

Another suggestion of the bishops that could be implemented immediately is a call for a petition for peace at every eucharistic celebration during the general intercessions. The bishops also are asking Catholics to make the sign of peace at Mass "an authentic sign of our reconciliation with God and with one another."

Also suggested by the bishops is devotion to Our Lady of Peace. "As believers we understand peace as a gift from God. This belief prompts us to pray constantly, personally and communally," the bishops say.

## Bishops 'Right,' Vatican Official Says

HAMBURG, West Germany (NC) — A top Vatican official, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, has said he agrees with the U.S. Catholic bishops that first use of nuclear weapons is morally wrong.

In an interview in the May 9 issue of Der Spiegel, a national news magazine, the German-born prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said, "Indeed I believe that the Americans are right in saying that the so-called first use of nuclear weapons is not, as regards morality, justifiable."

When the U.S. bishops issued their pastoral letter on war and peace in Chicago May 3, their condemnation of first use of nuclear weapons in response to a non-nuclear attack — a position opposed to NATO's

current strategic posture in Western Europe — was widely regarded as considerably stronger than the West German bishops wanted.

In the lengthy interview, which ran eight pages in Der Spiegel, Cardinal Ratzinger also defended the U.S. bishops against suggestions that they overreached their authority in addressing concrete political issues or that they were in conflict with the French or West German bishops in some of the positions they took. He praised them for having "the courage to confront (government) policy squarely."

He attributed differences in the nuclear stands of the American, French and West German hierarchies to the different contexts the bishops of each nation faces.

"America is — along with the Soviet Union — the only nation that...can trigger the annihilation of the world. That gives the church (in the United States) a very specific responsibility," he said.

He also stressed that the U.S. bishops did not go beyond their agreement with the Vatican and European bishops by entering into judgments on specific questions of nuclear policy and strategy.

"It was agreed that the bishops could also make concrete factual statements from the standpoint of morality, but that they could not make them any more binding on conscience if the facts were not beyond dispute."

The bishops' pastoral, the cardinal said, "is not a

'cookbook' of disarmament prescriptions, but it gives a guideline of morality."

Cardinal Ratzinger also rejected a suggestion that the U.S. bishops' pastoral amounted to a moral kiss of death to the theory of nuclear deterrence.

"If that followed," he said, "the American bishops would be contradicting themselves in their text. For they quite explicitly adopt the papal statement that deterrence as a stepping-stone to arms reductions is still tolerable for the time being. That is the basic moral formula of (Pope John Paul II's 1982) U.N. message. Only the moral content of working against war and of eliminating the instruments of war justifies what is otherwise immoral."

### Pope's Trip 'No Risk'

ROME (NC) — Poland's primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, told reporters May 16 that there was "no risk" that Pope John Paul II's upcoming visit to his homeland would be canceled.

The Polish cardinal, archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw, who came to confer with the pope on details of the visit, said that "almost everything has been prepared from an organizational point of view" for the June 16-23 papal trip. He said that recent anti-government demonstrations and conflicts between the church and the government will not lead to a cancellation.

"There is no risk of a cancellation," said the cardinal. "If others do not impede it, we will welcome the Holy Father with much dignity...The Polish faithful await the pope with much joy."

In an audience May 14 at the Vatican with members of Swiss Christian labor unions Pope John Paul, in alluding to the situation in his homeland, defended the right of workers to form unions "autonomous in respect to the political powers."

### But Jesuit Scholar Has Different View

WASHINGTON (NC) — The chief deficiency of the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace is that "it is very unclear about the reality and nature of politics over against an abstract analysis of weapons as things," said Jesuit Father James V. Schall, an associate professor of government at Georgetown University.

Addressing the Washington archdiocesan Serra Club, Father Schall called the pastoral "a useful guide for clarifying certain issues." But he warned that the Soviet Union would use it for propaganda, and he took issue with the way the bish-

ops handled some basic problems in the pastoral.

In particular he questioned the pastoral's emphasis on weapons as things in its discussion of the morality of nuclear deterrence.

"Weapons are not evil as 'things,' but as a function of a political will to use them," he said. "This includes sling shots as well as Garand rifles or nuclear weapons. Therefore, the primary way to prevent the use of any weapons is political, dissuasion addressed to the political will of an enemy intent on using weapons of whatever sort."

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### Nun on the Run

Sister Kathryn Narkavich sets the pace for students at Lebanon Catholic High School in Lebanon, Pa. The science and health teacher, who also enjoys biking, started the school's running club last fall. (NC Photo)

### NCC Commends Nuke Letter

SAN FRANCISCO (NC) — The governing board of the National Council of Churches voted overwhelmingly on May 13 to commend the U.S. Catholic bishops for issuing their pastoral letter on peace and war.

At the end of a four-day meeting in San Francisco, the board also called for a stronger commitment to peacemaking by Protestant and Orthodox churches. Since 1981, the council has been on record in favor of a nuclear freeze.

The council represents 32 Protestant and Orthodox denominations with about 40 million members.

Only two of the 266 governing board members voted against the resolution, which praised the courage of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in urging a "new theology of peace which views nuclear war as a most sinful confrontation with our Creator."

Meanwhile, the head of the Synagogue Council of America, Rabbi Walters Wurzbureger, also hailed the pastoral.

"The pronouncement represents an extraordinary opportunity for major religious groups to join together in cooperative efforts to end the nuclear arms race and save humankind from the threat of a nuclear holocaust

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