

Editorials

Vatican Envoy?

The so-what-else-is-new category. Recently when a bill was introduced in Congress to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the usual wailing immediately was heard.

To be clear, this particular editorial is not written either in defense of or in opposition to the idea; certainly there is no urgency on the part of the Church on the issue.

However, it is amusing to read the quick flood of antipathy to the idea, mostly under the guise of reason, that immediately spews forth whenever this subject is raised -- it seems on a quadrennial basis.

For instance, quote Melvin Adams, executive director of the Americans United for Separation of Church and State (it should be stressed that the Catholic Church has every reason to support such separation): "There is really no need for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican because the U.S. ambassador to the Italian government in Rome can easily handle whatever business may be necessary between the interested parties."

It would be interesting and far more germane to hear the ambassador to Rome on this point. A brief and minor sidebar occasioned by the experience of reporters from the newspaper covering the death of

Paul VI. The U.S., and its media, looked a bit ridiculous having to resort to Rome for help when all other nations had easy access to their own embassies at the Vatican. What made it more difficult was that the ambassador was vacationing at home so there was no guidance. Vatican diplomats were officially called to duty of course. And that was a relatively minor news story compared to the blockbusters emanating from the present occupant of the Vatican.

Further enlightenment from Adams: "Despite its claim to status as a sovereign state, the Vatican is essentially the seat of the Roman Catholic Church. We see serious constitutional problems stemming from entanglement between the American civil government and a religious entity."

It is difficult to ascertain what the fear is in this thinking. Is it the image of Swiss Guards attacking Washington, D.C.? Will that infamous tunnel beneath the Atlantic, which gained prominence when Catholic Al Smith ran for president, being reopened? Are Vatican emissaries not to be trusted on our shores as much as, say, those from the Soviet Union.?

Should the U.S. recall our ambassador from the Court of St. James (religion again!), our official emissary to the head of the Church of England.

Perhaps the greatest example of over-reaching is evidenced by Adams' remark: "Other international religious bodies which do not maintain a diplomatic

network in effect will become second-class religions."

Really? In what respect? In whose eyes? And what has that to do with Americans for Separation of Church and State?

Hate Meeting

In case any were still naive enough to believe that anti-Catholic bigotry was a thing of the past, some of the essence of the World Congress of Fundamentalists should be an eye-opener.

The site alone should be remembered -- Bob Jones University, a supposedly Christian institution. The case of characters is even more educative -- not only the Rev. Bob Jones Jr. himself was on hand to spew hatred but the one and only Rev. Ian Paisley and his hate-mongering act was imported from the British Isles.

This congress adopted a resolution calling the Catholic Church "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Nice people, huh?

Hate, in a sense, must have at least one of the characteristics of its opposite, love. Apparently, the more you give away the more you have. For, after a few more ludicrous swipes at the Catholic Church, this sick assemblage heard Paisley denounce television evangelizers as "the devil's brats." Seems when it comes to hating there's no rhyme, reason or limit.

and Opinion

Bishops Slight Armed Forces

EDITOR:

The bishops' pastoral on nuclear warfare and guidance to Catholics in formation of conscience in military matters deserves to be studied and critiqued by all responsible Catholics, as we were asked to by our bishop.

While there are several areas of this document in need of constructive criticism, one section is particularly disappointing in that it is devoid of pastoral compassion and reflects an alarming lack of sensitivity and genuine pastoral love. I refer to the section in which the bishops address Catholic men and women serving on active duty in the armed forces of their country.

After an introductory quotation affirming and quoting a statement from the Vatican II document on the subject of military service, the subsequent message to these men and women follows in a tone of demeaning clerical and ecclesiastical remoteness and aloofness. The remarks are cold and seem to say: "You people are really going to have to fend for yourselves when it comes to your pasto-

ral needs. And, by the way, let your consciences be your guide -- as long as you use this document to form your consciences!" The contrast between the tone of the message to members of the armed forces and the message to chaplains is so striking, that it jumps right out at the reader.

While this may come as a surprise to some of the bishops, particularly to Pax Christi bishops, millions of American Catholic servicemen and servicewomen serve and have served their country with well-formed consciences consistent with the traditional teachings of the Church. The pastoral love and service of thousands and thousands of chaplains through the years are remembered and still appreciated by all who receive and have received this spiritual comfort.

Those who serve in the uniform of our country deserve better than the bishops gave them in the pastoral. The Pax Christi organization and its bishop members do a grave disservice to our Catholic men and women on active duty by duplicitously implying that there are no alternatives for conscientious

objectors, by aiding and abetting draft registration evasion and by supporting those Pax Christi members who would like to see chaplaincy service in the armed forces eliminated.

As all Catholics read and study the pastoral, they should bear in mind that the three bishops designated to foster the study and teaching of the pastoral are all Pax Christi bishops.

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Let's End Malnutrition

EDITOR:

Orchids to "Global 2000 Revised" for pointing out that the population explosion is all baloney and no bang. In point of fact, all of this nonsense about the population explosion is making it very convenient for those who have power to do nothing to stop world malnutrition, of which there is still far too much.

In the worst-off nation in

the world, Ethiopia, the average intake of calories is more than 1,700 a day. Roy Walford, a UCLA medical professor, claims you can live perhaps 30 years longer if you limit your calories to about 1,500 a day, without shortages of necessary vitamins and minerals. By the way, he is practicing what he preaches and is still alive, although thinner. Other researchers have pointed out how the lack of a sufficient amount of this or that vitamin or mineral causes one or more of the defects commonly associated with malnutrition.

In point of fact, we could cure all the malnutrition in the world in every nation which wanted to cooperate by effectively spending less than the U.S. government spends every hour, but nobody cares enough to analyze the problem to see what needs to be done in the various nations and then do it. Maybe, thanks to Simon and Kagn and their fellow scientists who did "Global 2000 Revised," somebody in



"THIS IS ST. JOSEPH'S RECTORY. WE'VE GOT SOME MICE HERE THAT HAVE BEEN BEGATTING LIKE CRAZY."

a position of power will start asking "what needs to be done to stop malnutrition?" so we can eliminate this unnecessary scourge.

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Guidelines

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Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

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