

Pope Links Pro-Life, Peace Drive

Vatican City (NC) -- Pope John Paul II linked the pro-life and peace movements during his general audience Aug. 24.

"The cause of peace is the cause of life, and everything that wounds, weakens or destroys life attacks peace and the destiny of humanity," he said in English-language greetings to two groups.

The groups were the Bethlehem peace pilgrimage, composed of 19 people who are walking from Seattle to Christ's birthplace in Bethlehem, and a delegation of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations.

"May God imbue all the medical students of the world with a keen sense of service to life and responsibility for peace," the pope said.

The 7,500-mile Bethlehem peace pilgrimage is led by Father George Zabelka, a retired priest of the Diocese of Lansing, Mich., who was a chaplain to the U.S. airmen who carried out the 1945 atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

The pilgrimage hopes to reach Bethlehem by Christmas.

In his main audience talk, Pope John Paul discussed the formation of moral conscience.

"The path toward a mature moral conscience cannot even begin if the spirit

is not free from a mortal illness which is very widespread today: indifference toward the truth," he said.

A person who is indifferent runs the danger of "confusing fidelity to his or her own conscience with adherence to any personal opinion or to the opinion of the majority," the pope added.

Describing pride as the "ultimate origin" of "this very grave spiritual illness," Pope John Paul called for greater participation in the sacrament of reconciliation, especially during the Holy Year of Redemption.

He also urged adherence to the Church's teaching authority (magisterium) as an authoritative guideline in forming moral conscience.

"Fidelity to the magisterium of the Church keeps the moral conscience from going astray from the truth about the good of man," he said.

"It is not right to think of the moral conscience of the individual and the magisterium of the Church as two competitors, as two realities in conflict," Pope John Paul added.

"The authority which the magisterium enjoys, through the will of Christ, exists in order that the moral conscience may reach truth with security and remain there," he said.

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

Challenge My Words Not Loyalty

It helps to have a pretty thick hide if you are in this business of publishing your opinions.

Fortunately, I am rarely bothered by most of the criticisms which come in response to these columns. My comments and opinions are hung out there for whatever use they may be — to inform, to provoke thought, to demonstrate one way of reflecting on what is happening in the life of the church.

I expect and hope that readers will apply their own knowledge, experience and values in judging my judgments. If they disagree, I hope the disagreement will be civil and conducive to further discussion.

In spite of my thick skin, however, I have always been irritated by those letters which question my loyalty to the teachings and authority of the church.

One of the reasons for my irritation lies in my conviction that loyalty is an internal disposition which can rarely be judged by others, certainly not on the basis of an opinion expressed in a column.

Considering all the ways in which the love of

a spouse, a child, a parent can be expressed, most of us would be very hesitant to judge that this person does or does not love on the basis of a particular response.

It seems to me that our loyalty to the church — or our disloyalty — is similarly complex and similarly difficult to judge.

Over the years, my understanding of the church, of religious obedience, of religious authority has certainly changed. If it did not reflect my experience, thought and prayer, I would be an intellectual and religious vegetable.

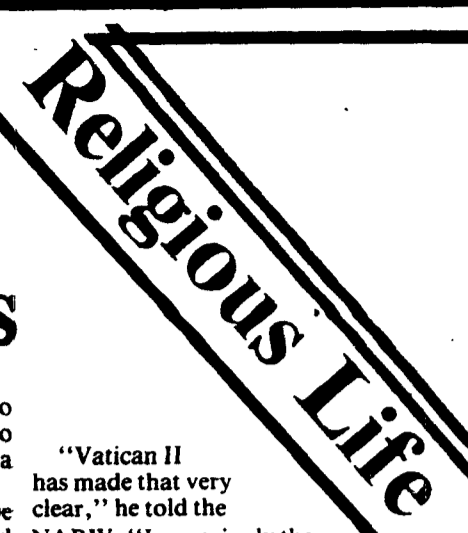
At 57, it would be totally inappropriate for me to have the identical understanding of church and religious obedience which was conveyed to me by the Sisters who taught me in grade school.

But even if I am wrong — as we all are at times — you cannot legitimately interpret this as evidence that in my basic attitudes I am disloyal to my bishop, my pope, my church.

One of my very basic convictions is that, in obedience and in loyalty, I owe the best of which I am capable.

For me to limit my response to one of simple conformity would be to withhold from my obedience and loyalty a major part of my personal resources.

Roles of Females, Blacks Considered At Religious Forums



By NC News Service

At separate mid-August forums, U.S. Religious pondered the place of female and black Religious in the Church and worried about the Vatican-mandated U.S. bishops' commission to study the condition of U.S. religious orders.

The concerns were raised at meetings of several different groups: the National Assembly of Religious Women in Chicago Aug. 11-14; the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Baltimore Aug. 14-18; and the combined conference Aug. 8-12 in Jackson, Miss., of the National Black Sisters' Conference, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus and the National Black Catholic Seminarians Association.

Drawing much attention at the LCWR and NARW meetings was the Vatican's commission, headed by Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco and involving as well Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly of Louisville, Ky., a Dominican, and Bishop Raymond W. Lessard of Savannah, Ga. Reservations about the panel's purpose and mandate were also expressed earlier in August at a meeting of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the male counterpart of LCWR.

Archbishop Quinn, during a closed session with LCWR, defended the commission. He and Sister Helen Flaherty of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, the outgoing president of LCWR, later held a press conference and the text of the archbishop's talk was released.

"What the Holy See is asking for is an extension of dialogue" of men and women Religious with the bishops and Church as a whole, he said.

Although some Religious have publicly complained that the commission's creation appears to signal papal disapproval of U.S. Religious or a Vatican effort to impose stricter, more uniform rules on all religious communities, Archbishop Quinn portrayed the Vatican action in a much more positive light.

He said extension of the dialogue among Religious to the bishops and Church at large is crucial for Religious "both to explain the achievements of the past 20 years (and) to receive serious, supportive and critical challenge."

In his talk, the archbishop said he had

appointed a committee of Religious to work with the commission. He also emphasized better communication as a central goal of the commission.

However, he added that "it would be unrealistic to expect of this renewed effort at communication that all disagreements would cease and all misunderstandings be erased."

Archbishop Quinn also admitted that the Vatican's intentions for the commission are still unclear in some areas. On the wearing of religious habits, he said, "this has not been interpreted, but I don't consider it a fundamental question."

The theme of the LCWR convention, which drew some 700 participants, was "Weaving Patterns for Peace."

While aimed primarily at projecting the peacemaking role of women in a world preoccupied with force and violence the messages at the assembly also referred to internal healing and reconciliation within the Church.

Alluding to conflicts nuns have undergone during their renewal since Vatican II, Sister Flaherty said that the "signs of the times challenged us to exercise our prophetic role."

"We did examine and critique," she said.

In Chicago, participants at the NARW meeting, resolving to "stand together" and "not be broken," adopted a statement objecting to "the call of the bishops for an investigation of religious life in the United States."

"Our sense of betrayal is profound as we consider the recent actions of our Church against women Religious," the NARW statement said.

Sister of Charity Roseann Mazzeo, chairwoman of the NARW national board, said the nuns were concerned about Archbishop Quinn's commission.

"People aren't sure what it means and there's a sense of urgency to talk about it," she said.

Some 200 nuns and lay women attended the four-day meeting, whose theme was "The Spirituality of Politics: A Women's Concern."

According to Bishop Michael McAuliffe of Jefferson City, Mo., who from 1974-82 chaired the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Women in the Church and in Society, "the bishops are undoubtedly for the equality of women and men."

"Vatican II has made that very clear," he told the NARW. "Increasingly the bishops will implement this principle as they strive to make equality more a reality in the life of the Church."

He called on the Church to use women's gifts by having women serve as pastoral administrators of parishes and by studying the possibility of restoring the diaconate for women. New Testament accounts of women deacons offers "great hope," he said.

The role of black Religious in the Church was a topic at the meeting of black nuns, priests and seminarians in Jackson.

Many black Religious find themselves with divided allegiances, trying to respond to the expectations of the predominantly white Religious and the black community, Benedictine Father Cyprian Davis, professor of Church history at St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, Ind., told the groups.

"As men and women of God, we find ourselves at some time or other...caught in a no-man's land -- too far along to go back, too far back to go forward," he said at the conference, whose theme was "Who Do You Say That I Am?"

"To be a black Religious or priest is to partake of this mystery of Christ as mediator. It is to become a bridge. The price of mediatorship...the cost of being a bridge...is that one must be stretched to reach both sides," he said. "It is also the cost of being placed on the cross -- to be suspended between heaven and earth and to join the one with the other," he said.

There are about 120,000 women Religious in the United States. Some 100,000 nuns are in communities headed by the 725 members of LCWR. Of NARW's 2,000 members, about two thirds are nuns and one third are lay women.

The United States also has about 58,000 priests and 12,000 seminarians.

There are about 700 black nuns and 300 black priests in the United States, according to the National Office for Black Catholics. Membership figures for the black priests' and sisters' organizations were not immediately available.

MORAL REARMAMENT OUR LADY'S PATH TO PEACE THE FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTIONS!

HER REQUESTS:

- Confessions
- Holy Communion
- Five Decades of the Rosary
- Fifteen minutes of meditation on Rosary mysteries
- all done in a spirit of reparation
- on Five First Saturdays of five consecutive months

HER PROMISES:

- eternal salvation
- conversion of Russia



These First Saturday Devotions will begin at ST. MARY'S CHURCH, 25 Center St., WATERLOO, Saturday, September 3, at noon Mass

— all are invited —

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