

U.S. Bishop, Vatican Condemn Soviet Attack on Korean Airliner

L'Osservatore: 'An Absurd Act'

Rome (AP) — Pope John Paul II sent his condolences to the Korean people and the official Vatican newspaper issued a harshly worded editorial in the wake of the Sept. 1 attack on a Korean Air Lines jet near the Soviet island of Sakhalin which killed 269 passengers.

The Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, in a signed front-page editorial harshly condemned the attack and said those responsible "lacked all elementary respect for life."

Without naming the Soviet Union, which later admitted that its jet interceptors shot down the plane, the editorial said that if the reported version of the events were true, then "the words pronounced about peace are without meaning."

A Soviet statement broadcast Sept. 6 said Soviet planes had been ordered to stop the flight of the intruding aircraft and said the Soviet pilots "couldn't know that it was a civilian plane."

Pope John Paul, in a telegram to Cardinal Stephen Kim of Seoul, said he was "shocked" by the tragedy and sent his heartfelt condolences to you and the

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Korean people at this time of intense sorrow.

The telegram, sent Sept. 2, the day after the attack, added: "I join with you and all the citizens of your country in earnestly praying for peace among the nations of the world."

The L'Osservatore Romano editorial, published Sept. 3 and signed by the newspaper's director, Valerio Volpini, said that hundreds of defenseless people were "condemned to a horrible death without any hesitation."

"This is an event that goes beyond our imagination. How could it happen that whoever decided to down this airplane failed to think of another solution to protecting national airspace, beyond that of destruction?" the editorial said.

The article ended by declaring the incident "an absurd and terrible act, contrary to international customs, that cannot be defined as an act of war but as the indiscriminate murder of innocents. It is a monstrous tragedy that offends the conscience of all men and all nations."

Archbishop Roach: 'An Act of Murder'

Washington (NC) — The president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has condemned as "an act of murder" the Soviet attack on a Korean Air Lines jet which killed 269 passengers Sept. 1.

The NCCB president, Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis, also said the incident illuminates "the danger and fragility of international relations today." He commended President Reagan for deciding not to cut off U.S.-Soviet negotiations on nuclear arms limitations.

In a statement issued at NCCB headquarters in Washington Sept. 7 Archbishop Roach said incidents such as the Soviet attack must be called by "their real names."

He added, "The conscious, purposeful destruction of the Korean airliner was a direct attack on innocent human lives -- an act of murder."

Archbishop Roach said the incident "in more than one way" illuminates the nature of international relations.

"As the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace observes, the United States and the Soviet Union are divided by philosophy and history, but linked in their

shared capacity to do enormous injury to one another and to the world," he said.

That capacity to inflict injury on each other underlines the common interest which both countries share, he added.

Archbishop Roach praised Reagan "for recognizing the moral reality" of the Soviet action and the "moral imperative of a U.S. response that does not exceed what is necessary."

"In particular I agree that despite this massive and evil tragedy U.S.-Soviet negotiations on nuclear arms limitations must continue," he said.

Archbishop Roach's mention of the bishops' pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," marked the first time since it was approved by the bishops last May that the pastoral's teachings have been used by the bishops' conference to address a specific international issue.

The pastoral states that despite differences between the U.S. and Soviet systems, "the irreducible truth is that objective mutual interests" -- such as a reduction in the danger of nuclear war -- "do exist between the two superpowers."

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

choice: either this or debtor's prison.

The lender stooped and picked up two pebbles. The girl, sharp-eyed with fright, noticed that the lender had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. What could she do? To expose his villainy would only stir his wrath. To refuse to choose, she would send her father to prison.

The desperate girl used her head. She reached into the bag, pulled out a pebble and, without looking at it, accidentally dropped it on the ground where it was lost among all the other pebbles.

"Oh," she cried, "how clumsy of me!" Then, she added, "But it doesn't matter. If we look into the bag, we'll be able to tell which pebble I took from the color of the one that is left." The crooked lender, of course, did not dare admit his dishonesty, so the girl won both her own and her father's freedom. Was the girl dishonest or prudent?

So God wants us to use our brains. We can be clever without being cunning; subtle without being misleading; sharp without being dishonest.

Dishonesty Rewarded?

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 16/1-13. (R1) Am. 8/4-7. (R2) 1 Tm. 2/1-8.

Sunday's parable — "The Crooked Manager" — has often posed difficulties in interpretation. Is dishonesty to be lauded? The manager created his own problems and tried to solve them in a questionable way, to say the least. The employer smiled and said, "Pretty clever of the old chap."

Since the moral of the parable wasn't too clear, St. Luke applied morals: "the worldly take more initiative than the other-worldly;" "make friends for yourselves through your use of this world's goods;" "if you cannot be trusted with elusive wealth, who will trust you with lasting?"

Actually, we shall be close to Luke's interpretation if we say our Lord meant us to imitate the manager in his prudence, not in his dishonesty. So many good people don't use their heads. Lenin labeled them "useful idiots" — those well-meaning people who unwittingly further the cause of the world revolution.

When God gave us brains, He probably intended us to use them. As Henry Ford quipped once: "Thinking is hard work, that is why so few engage in it." The French artist, Henri Matisse, who tried to clarify forms by a process of color simplification in his oil paintings, was asked, "How do you

mix colors?" He answered curtly, "With brains, sir, with brains."

Centuries ago there lived in London a dour money lender worse than Scrooge. A merchant owed him a large sum and was unable to repay it. The lender proposed a vile bargain: the merchant's young and beautiful daughter for the cancellation of the debt. The merchant recoiled at the vile offer. Then piously, the lender offered to put it in the hands of God. "Suppose," he said, "I put a white and black pebble in a bag, and let the girl draw one. If white, the debt would be cancelled and she would not have to marry him. But if black, the debt would still be cancelled but the girl would have to marry him."

The merchant had no

Recorder Group

The Rochester chapter of the American Recorder Society meets 7:30 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, starting Sept. 13, at the First Baptist Church, 175 Allens Creek Road. Classes on the instrument are available through the society. Further information is available by calling Betty Weisansal, 235-6726.

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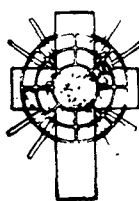
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