

# While We Were Away...

The Courier-Journal traditionally does not publish the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Here is a roundup of events that occurred during our hiatus.

## Banco Ambrosiano Report

In Rome, a commission of Vatican and Italian officials investigating links between the Vatican and the bankrupt Banco Ambrosiano has given its report to Italian and Vatican officials, a commission member said Dec. 15.

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## Vatican Critical of Court

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano on Dec. 16 said the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to intervene in a Baby Jane Doe case "constitutes a violation of the right to life."

In a related vein, just three days earlier, Vatican Radio editorialized: "We cannot impose on anyone the obligation to have recourse to therapeutic interventions when the interventions can possibly carry with them equal or greater suffering than benefits." The editorial said in certain cases "we have to stop at the threshold of conscience of which God only is the supreme and infallible judge."

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## Document Must Be Studied

One of the men who played a key role in preparing the U.S. bishops' peace pastoral, Father Brian Hehir, warned Dec. 19 that Catholics must study and act on the document or its potential will be wasted.

Father Hehir, secretary-designate of the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Social Development and World Peace, said that "if we do not carry on the discussion within the church, all of the other places that have found the document interesting ... will decide that it's not being taken seriously."

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## New Diocese in U.S.

As of Dec. 20, there has been a new Ukrainian diocese in the United States -- St. Josaphat with headquarters in Parma, Ohio. In creating the diocese, Pope John Paul II named Auxiliary Bishop Robert M. Moskal of the Ukrainian Diocese of Philadelphia its new bishop.

That same day in Vatican City, an official said that Ugo Gobbi, Argentine vice minister of Foreign Affairs, met with Vatican aides to discuss settlement of a territorial dispute between Argentina and Chile. The dispute involves three small islands off the southern tip of South America.



## Death Wish Denied

In Riverside, Calif., Superior Court Judge John Hews reads his ruling in which he denied a 26-year-old quadriplegic Elizabeth Bouvia the right to starve herself to death while under hospital care. An attorney for Miss Bouvia said she still intends to starve with or without court sanction. (NC Photo)



## Sex Ed Guidelines Hit

An American coalition opposed to sex education programs called on the U.S. Catholic Conference to abandon its guidelines, "Education in Human Sexuality for Christians," and asked two priests who work with family life issues to renounce the guidelines. Officers of the national Coalition of Interstate Committees of Clergy and Laity praised guidelines released Dec. 1 by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education and said that "the document repudiates what has been happening for the last 15 to 20 years in the United States."

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## Antonov in Ill Health

In Rome, a Bulgarian suspect in the 1981 attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II was transferred from prison for health reasons and placed under house arrest. The decision to transfer Sergei Ivanov Antonov came one day after judicial officials saw reports by prison doctors who had examined Antonov for what his lawyers said was general failing health.

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## Chile Holds 3 Priests

Three missionary priests, including an American, were arrested Dec. 14 in Santiago, Chile, for participating in protests against the torture of political detainees. Fathers Dennis O'Mara of Chicago and Lee Murray and Rod MacGinley of Ireland have participated in the monthly protests since July.

## Hollings Apology Asked

In what could be seen as a bit of an indiscretion considering he is a presidential hopeful, Sen. Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina reportedly called the Catholic bishops of the United States "a bunch of kids" during debate over tuition tax credits.

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has urged the senator to apologize for the "insulting" remark.

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## Cranston Opposes Credits

And still another Democratic presidential candidate, Sen. Alan Cranston of California, responding to a letter from Cardinal Timothy Manning of Los Angeles, said he does not believe tuition tax credits for families with children in private schools can be justified.

"Although I have supported the participation of private schools in many federal education programs, I don't believe we can justify the enormous cost of tax credits for private education -- about \$4 billion a year -- when so many public school programs have been drastically reduced to achieve lower government spending levels," said Cranston, a Democratic candidate for president in 1984.

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## Lutherans Laud Visit

The World Lutheran Federation on Dec. 16 praised Pope John Paul II's visit to a Lutheran church in Rome as an important ecumenical event and "a unique signal which should encourage more local Lutheran-Roman Catholic encounters throughout the world."

The statement was issued by Carl Mau, federation secretary general, after the editor of a federation newsletter criticized the Dec. 11 papal visit as a "staged ecumenical show."

## Pupils Make Christmas

The faculty and students of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Brockport celebrated their Christmas program at the church to which Sister Mary Anne Laurer, SSJ, principal welcomed the families. All grades participated by telling the Story of Christmas through the alphabet and songs. The kindergarten "Angel Band" played their sticks, bells, and tambourines; the second grade sang "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus," written by Connie Mesiti, one of the parents; the sixth grade acted out the Story of Christmas, and the faculty sang "Silent Night" while Mary Martin interpreted the sign language version. Co-directors of the event which featured Jean Martin Brooks on organ, Jan Reding on guitar, and Sueane Hemmer, flute, were Jean Martin Brooks and Mary Anne Pietrzykowski.



## Moral Safeguards Task of Catholic Press, Pope Says

Vatican City (NC) -- Catholic weekly newspapers play a key role in promoting moral values and inviting meditation by a modern society too often exposed to superficiality, Pope John Paul II said Dec. 2.

The pope, speaking to a meeting of the Federation of Italian Catholic Weeklies, said the weekly format helps favor "thoughtful evaluation" over the "rush of information" exhibited in the daily press.

"Weeklies work as a corrective to deformed news or to calculated silences," the pope said. "They have the privilege of contributing decisively to thoughtful meditation and interior growth -- that 'civilization of thought' -- that modern society greatly needs because it is exposed to the dangers of distraction and superficiality."

One of the tasks of the Catholic press, the pope said, is the promotion and safeguarding of moral values.

"In today's climate of permissiveness, which is often taken to extremes by publishers, this ethical role assumes a key significance," the pope said.

Catholic weeklies, he added, are a valuable instrument for increasing readers' awareness of the particular and the universal church. Journalism, he said, corresponds to a "genuine vocation" and a "generous ministry."

The pope also referred to the financial difficulties of many weeklies, but said that "financial and technical scarcity" is often joined with more important characteristics of enthusiasm and vigor.