

Fight for Family, Father Ritter Tells Senators

Washington (NC) -- Conventual Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter, founder of Covenant House, asked senators to continue the battle for the American family and against the exploitation of children.

"The traditional American family is an awesomely strong and resilient institution, but it has probably never been closer to collapse than it is now," Father Ritter told the Senate Caucus on the Family in Washington Jan. 26.

Sen. Jeremiah Denton (R-Ala.), who formed the Senate Caucus on the Family, praised Father Ritter's work

with runaway children at Covenant House in New York and his programs in Houston, Toronto and Antigua, Guatemala. Earlier Father Ritter had been praised by President Reagan in his State of the Union address Jan. 25.

Father Ritter condemned what he called the deterioration and virtual collapse of the social and moral climate which supports and nourishes family life.

"The exploitation of children as sexual objects and partners remains a brutal part of our moral landscape. That terrain gives little shelter to values that support



FATHER RITTER

and sustain healthy family life," he said.

He recommended to the senators that changes be made in the current tax structure as it applies to families and in federal public assistance programs to help poor, single-parent families.

At a press conference following the meeting with the senators, Father Ritter called for a return to authentic human values such as truth and fidelity that are intrinsic in keeping families together. He also said the government should allow parents the right to control the moral education of their children and the right to know when their children receive contraceptives or abortions.

Speaking of his experience helping runaway young people who have turned to prostitution to survive, Father Ritter said "the street mangles children."

The million runaway children in the United States left homes where they were abused, Father Ritter said. "Kids don't run away from warm, loving families because they want the excitement of the streets."

According to Father Ritter half of the children who seek shelter at Covenant House in New York have been the victims of repeated physical abuse. Nationally, he said that 25 percent of girls and 10 percent of boys will have suffered some form of sexual abuse by age 18. Of the children who go to Covenant House, less than a quarter have been raised in two-parent homes.

He said Covenant House is able to help only one third of the children who take shelter there -- either through family reconciliation, by placing the child in a longer-term program or by helping the child establish an independent living arrangement.

"The time for repairing endangered families and rescuing their children is not after they have fallen apart," Father Ritter said. "Broken families and homeless children present a searing challenge -- it is, in my view, the deepest ethical and moral challenge of our generation."

"It is a national scandal how relatively little many of our local religious and community organizations do to reach out to families in need. As long as we persist in thinking that only government can solve problems of poverty and social disintegration, the prospect of any breakthroughs in those areas will remain bleak."

But government can create a climate that nourishes the family, Father Ritter said, by relieving the disproportionate burden of taxation faced by families with children and by considering public assistance supplements for older children and for single parents who enroll in parenting, remedial education and vocation education programs.

Former Ambassador: U.S. Covering Evidence In Archbishop's Slaying

Washington (NC) -- The Reagan administration has been covering up evidence linking a key Salvadoran political leader, Robert D'Aubuisson, to the 1980 murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero, according to Robert White, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador at the time.

D'Aubuisson, head of El Salvador's Constituent Assembly and ARENA party presidential candidate, has previously denied any connection with the archbishop's assassination.

"From the first days in office the Reagan White House knew -- beyond any reasonable doubt -- that Robert D'Aubuisson planned and ordered the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero," said White Feb. 2 in prepared testimony for a House subcommittee.

"The Reagan White House took on a great responsibility when it chose to conceal the identity of Archbishop Romero's murderer and not to use the evidence gathered by the embassy to write finish to the political fortunes of

ARENA and the ambitions of Roberto D'Aubuisson," White said. He described ARENA as "a fascist party" supported by "rich Salvadoran exiles."

White resigned from U.S. diplomatic service after Reagan replaced him in January 1981 as ambassador to El Salvador because of policy disagreements.

White said D'Aubuisson summoned about 12 men to a meeting March 22, 1980, announced the decision to kill the archbishop and supervised the drawing of lots to determine who would carry out the plot. The information was obtained by a U.S. embassy official who made contact with a Salvadoran military officer present at the meeting, added White.

He said the person who killed the archbishop was Walter Antonio Alvarez who was killed several months later on D'Aubuisson's orders.

White called D'Aubuisson "a terrorist, a murderer and a leader of death squads."

"ARENA is a fascist party

modeled after the Nazis and certain revolutionary communist groups," said White. "ARENA has a politico-military organization which embraces not only a civilian party structure but also a military arm obedient to the party."

"The founders and chief supporters of ARENA are rich Salvadoran exiles headquartered in Miami and civilian activists in El Salvador. ARENA's military arm comprises officers and men of the Salvadoran army and security forces," he added.

White prepared his testimony for the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs which is considering legislation based on the Kissinger Commission report on Central America. The commission urged \$8.4 billion in military and economic aid to the region over a five-year period.

White opposed military aid to El Salvador and advocated negotiations between the government and guerrillas as the way to end the four-year civil war.

"The continuance of military assistance will only signal support for ARENA and the disloyal and murderous economic and military elites which continue to impose a system which depends on organized terror for its existence," he said.

"As long as we continue military aid to the present military leadership of El Salvador, they will never permit negotiations," White said.

Archbishop Romero, who headed the San Salvador Archdiocese, was shot to death while he was celebrating Mass March 24, 1980. No one has been arrested for the crime and church officials have complained that no serious investigation of the murder occurred.

Archbishop Romero had been criticized by the military and wealthy landowners as a communist sympathizer and friend of the guerrillas because of his criticisms that the nation's economic and political power structures were unjust to the poor.

Valentine Party

Children at the Developmental Center will be treated to a Valentine Party by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, 1:30 p.m., Feb. 23. Mrs. Rose Hendrickson is chairman of the event, assisted by Mrs. Carrie LaDelfa and Mrs. Rose Wolf. Donations of baked goods will be asked of CDA members.

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Pa. Diocese Bans Intercommunion, General Absolution

Greensburg, Pa. (NC) -- Bishop William G. Connare of Greensburg has announced that general absolution and Catholic-Protestant intercommunion are prohibited in his diocese.

The conditions under which these practices might be allowed do not exist in the Greensburg area, the bishop said in an announcement reported Jan. 5 in his diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Accent*.

Regarding general absolution -- the administration of the sacrament of penance to a group without individual confession by the participants -- Bishop Connare said this form of the sacrament is reserved for two kinds of situations:

— "An emergency situation of catastrophic proportions which threatens the life of a number of people and there is no time for individual confessions"; and

— "Grave necessity" when there are not enough priests to hear individual confessions and the people would be deprived of receiving the sacrament for a long period of time.

"Fortunately, our diocese is blessed with enough fine priests so that a penitent is not deprived of the sacramental grace of penance for any lengthy time," said Bishop Connare.

"The mere gathering of a large number of penitents, for example at a penance service or on a pilgrimage, is not sufficient cause for granting general absolution," he added. "Proper planning for such services should include providing an adequate number of priest confessors."

He reaffirmed the diocese's 1979 policy statement prohibiting intercommunion and said that, in light of the church's new Code of Canon Law, that policy also applies to reception of penance or anointing of the sick by non-Catholics. The policy statement says, "We cannot admit non-Catholic Christians to Communion in our churches, nor can we receive Communion in theirs."

He said the situation in the Greensburg Diocese does not conform to all the conditions necessary for non-Catholic sharing in the Catholic Eucharist, which Vatican norms allow only in individual cases of pastoral need, when the non-Catholic party is unable to participate in the Eucharist in his or her own church community and when other conditions are met.

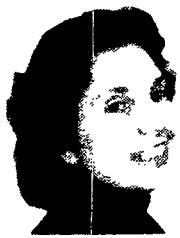
The policy against intercommunion is not a "regression in our desire for Christian unity" but expresses the Catholic view that "sacramental intercommunion is not permissible until unity in faith is achieved," the bishop said.

Archdiocese Stock Soars

Chicago -- By cashing in on a \$60 million killing in the market last year, the Archdiocese of Chicago was able to erase an operating deficit of \$29 million that had accumulated over 20 years. Despite a transfer of \$24 million out of endowment funds to operating funds, the total value of the archdiocese's endowment investments increased in the year by \$21 million, from \$95.6 million to \$116.6 million. The report on the archdiocese's latest fiscal year, ending June 30, 1983, was published Jan. 13 in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Chicago Catholic*.

Sarah Child

All in the Family



William Penn Would Never Believe It

The mention of Shickshinny, Pa., in the morning paper recently set me smiling. At 7 a.m., the cacophony tickled my funnybone. Yet, being a native Pennsylvanian, I'd grown up hearing such names none of which seemed much out of the ordinary.

"We stopped and got gas at Turtlepoint" or "storm closed the schools in Shinglehouse" or "he built a new house up in Cyclone" raised nobody's eyebrow's. Nor did "he attends Slippery Rock" (a college).

Lumped together, however, Penn names make for a memorable, sometimes melodious, sometimes arresting list.

The Commonwealth has long been known for its Amish country names of Bird-in-Hand, Paradise and Intercourse. But this is only the tip of the iceberg in a state which boasts a city in each corner and hundreds of hamlets in between.

Another well-known place is Punxsutawney, famed for its weather prognosticator, Mr. Groundhog. An Indian name, it ranks right up there with Sinnemahoning and Monongahela, which are both rivers and towns.

Some villages have names whose origins can easily be guessed: like the aforementioned Shinglehouse, there is Two Taverns, Big Shanty, Yellow House, Yellow Creek and Potato City.

I was born in Austin, moved to Roulette (pronounced Row-lette) and settled in Smethport. If the first and last sound humdrum, sections of the towns, Snowshoe and Dogtown, redeem them.

As kids in school, we were always taught that some of the highest grade oil in the world was produced around Bradford (you can see oil wells in people's front yards). Oil City, Derrick City and Burning Well also testify to the small industry.

If figures that a state

which houses Bethlehem also would have Christmas and Christmasville and Christiana. Promised Land, too.

My husband, who grew up in the big city environs of Albany, N.Y., said he always liked the sound of Bloomster Hollow. There are a lot of hollows and runs in Pennsylvania and most of them seemed to be named.

Some names because they are associated with my childhood will always be music to my ear. Costello where my father was born, Conrad for my mother, and Wharton in between and, of course, Hammersley, where now only maples grow, was Gram B's birthplace.

Deer and deerhunting are big in Pennsylvania. So we have Buck, Bucktail, Buck Hill Falls, Buck Mt., Buck Run, Buck Valley, Buckville, Hunter, Hunters Town and Huntersville, as well as Buck Horn and Nine Point. Add Fawn Grove.

In Conrad, there is a "crick" named the Wild Boy. Maiden Creek is its counterpart. Sinking Spring and Shimers Eddy are other water spots.

I don't know if any treasure was ever found in Gold or if Emporium started out as a trading post. Sizerville was well-known to us for the state park swimming pool and the size of its rattlers.

What do you suppose people from Pigeon, Owls Nest and Eagle call themselves? And I've often wondered if it's noisy in Roaring Branch, Roaring Creek, Roaring Spring and Roaring Run.

Saint Mary's was a short drive from us. Lots of other "Saints" live in Pa., too, including Austine, Benedict, Boniface, Clair, David, John, Joseph, Lawrence, Michael, Paul, Peter and Thomas.

I kind of cotton to Defiance and Endeavor but if I had to pick out a town to live in by name alone I would be hard-pressed to choose. I don't know whether King of Prussia or Haags Mill would be most impressive on my return stickers.