

World, Nation, People . . . in Brief

Provided by NC News Service

World

Pope Sends Mideast Envoy

Vatican City -- Pope John Paul II has sent a special envoy to Lebanon and Syria because he is "deeply worried" about the Lebanese situation, said a Vatican communique. The March 6 communique identified the envoy as Archbishop Mario Brini, former secretary of the Vatican Congregation for Eastern-Rite Churches, who left Rome March 6, and was scheduled to meet in Beirut, Lebanon, with President Amin Gemayel and Maronite Catholic Patriarch Antoine-Pierre Khoraihe and in Damascus, Syria, with President Hafez Assad.

\$9.2 Million for Africa

Vatican City -- Using more than \$9.2 million donated by West German Catholics, Pope John Paul II has begun a development fund for Africa's drought-ridden and famine-plagued Sahel region, announced Cardinal Bernardin Gantin March 6 at a Vatican press conference.

Lutheran-Catholic Wrapup

Rome -- The international Lutheran-Catholic Joint Commission held its final meeting in Rome Feb. 27-March 3, wrapping up 10 years of work by proposing concrete approaches the Catholic and Lutheran churches can take to reunite. The final document of the commission, "Facing Unity: Models, Forms and Phases of Lutheran-Roman Catholic Church Unity," was approved but not immediately made public. On March 2 Pope John Paul II met with the commission members and praised their work "in erecting the house of unity which we are building together."

Pope Speaks on Lent

Vatican City -- Lent means spiritual renewal through prayer, sacrifice and works of charity, Pope John Paul II told more than 23,000 pilgrims on Ash Wednesday, March 7, during his weekly general audience. Referring to the reception of ashes which marks the beginning of Lent, the pope said that "through this austere sign, the church calls us to spiritual renewal through the more fervent practice of prayer, sacrifice and works of charity." During Lent, he added, "we are also encouraged to receive more frequently the sacrament of penance." More details, Crossroads page.

Papal Advice for Priests

Vatican City -- Pope John Paul II has suggested to a group of Franciscan superiors that priests should devote more time to study, reflection and prayer. The pope made the suggestion during a private audience at the Vatican with 50 Capuchin Franciscans who are provincial officials in Italy. The audience took place in early March after the priests arrived in Rome to attend a two-month workshop on the formation of candidates for the priesthood.

Nation

Berrigan Ruling Review Sought

Philadelphia -- Montgomery County District Attorney Joseph A. Smyth Jr. said Feb. 28 that he would ask the state Supreme Court to review an appellate decision granting a new trial to the so-called Plowshares Eight, including Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan. The Pennsylvania Superior Court Feb. 17 gave the district attorney 120 days to call for a new trial or drop charges against the eight, who were convicted of damaging nuclear missile components at a General Electric plant.

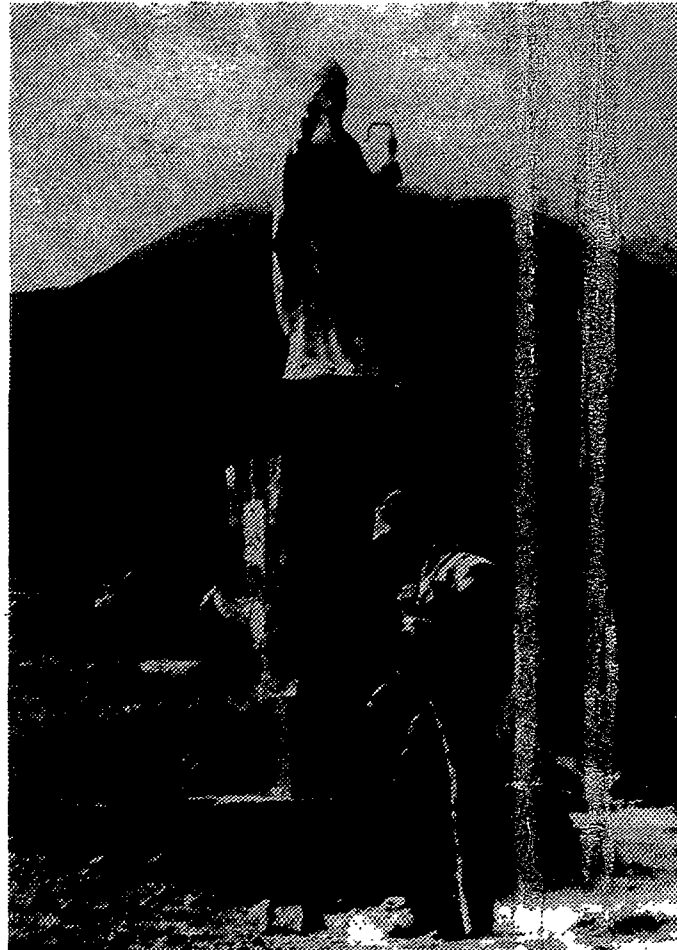
Opponents to Link Busy

Washington -- Opponents of formal U.S.-Vatican diplomatic relations March 5 opened their battle on another front -- a Senate subcommittee -- and again said formal ties threaten separation of church and state and the independence of the Catholic Church in America. Protestant groups, joined by the National Association of Laity, a 1,300-member Catholic organization, asked the Senate appropriations subcommittee which handles funding for the State Department not to approve a department request to transfer funds to support a U.S. embassy at the Vatican.

USCC: Suspend Deportations

Washington -- Legislation which would suspend deportations of Salvadorans in the United States has been endorsed by the U.S. Catholic Conference, public policy arm of the U.S. bishops. Expressing "concern for the safety and well-being of all Salvadorans," Msgr. Daniel F. Hoye, USCC general secretary, urged swift passage of the legislation, which would suspend the deportations for three years. The bill, H.R. 4447, is sponsored by Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr., D-N.J., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

Focus on Today's World



A pilgrim prays at the foot of Ireland's Croagh Patrick by a statue of St. Patrick before climbing to the summit of the mountain. Legend says that St. Patrick prayed and fasted on the mountain during Lent of 441. (NC Photo)



Celia Suazo of Payson, Utah, shows off the brick from the Vatican Holy Door she recently received. She and other members of the San Andres Mission have been praying for a new church and she plans to donate the brick for the building. (NC Photo)



Prior to speaking at a forum sponsored by the House Republican Study Committee on prayer in public schools, former Los Angeles Rams star Rosey Grier, former Harlem Globetrotter Meadowlark Lemon, former Baltimore Colts star Lenny Moore, and actor Demond Wilson bow their heads in prayer. (NC Photo)

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the Saints *by Luke*

St. JOSEPH



AFTER MARY, ST. JOSEPH IS OUR GREATEST INTERCESSOR.

ST. JOSEPH WAS BORN OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF DAVID, BUT HE LIVED IN OBSCURITY AS A CARPENTER WHEN GOD CHOSE HIM TO BE FOSTER FATHER AND GUARDIAN OF JESUS AND SPOUSE OF THE VIRGIN MARY. SCRIPTURE SAYS JOSEPH WAS A JUST MAN. HE WAS INNOCENT, PURE, GENTLE, AND PRUDENT. JOSEPH WAS OBEIENT TO GOD'S CALLS THOUGH HE OFTEN WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THINGS HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, SUCH AS: HOW MARY COULD BE WITH CHILD UNTIL AN ANGEL EXPLAINED; AT THE PRESENTATION OF BABY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE WHEN SIMEON FORETOLD A SWORD WOULD PIERCE MARY'S HEART; WHEN THE HOLY FAMILY FLED INTO EGYPT TO ESCAPE HEROD'S CRUEL SLAUGHTER OF INFANT BOYS, AND AT THE LOSS OF THE CHRIST CHILD FOR THREE LONG DAYS. AS NO FURTHER MENTION IS MADE OF ST. JOSEPH, HE MUST HAVE DIED BEFORE THE MARRIAGE AT CANA AND THE START OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY. HE IS ESPECIALLY INVOKED FOR THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH. HE IS ALSO PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH. THE FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH IS CELEBRATED ON MARCH 19.

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