

Report: Vatican Envoy Rebuked for Involving Self in Marcinkus Probe

Washington (NC) — U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See William Wilson was rebuked in 1982 for "inappropriate" involvement in possible investigations of Vatican bank head Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, according to reports in the Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post.

In a separate incident in 1983, the newspaper said, Wilson was rebuked by a leading State Department official for involving himself in the case of American financier Marc Rich, who fled the United States to avoid charges of tax evasion, fraud and racketeering.

In both cases, the newspapers said, officials were concerned about the propriety of Wilson's being involved in highly sensitive and widely publicized international criminal investigations.

The newspapers, citing unnamed government sources, said that in 1982 Wilson, then President Reagan's personal envoy to Pope John Paul II, wrote to U.S. Attorney General William French Smith, apparently to vouch for Archbishop Marcinkus' character and to learn the status of any U.S. investigations which might involve him.

At the time Italian authorities wanted to question Archbishop Marcinkus concerning the role of the Vatican bank in illegal activities by Italian banker Roberto Calvi which led to the

collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano.

The Post and the Times said that Kenneth Starr, then a counselor to the attorney general and now a federal appeals court judge, wrote back to Wilson, saying that his contact with the attorney general concerning Archbishop Marcinkus had been inappropriate.

The Times, which broke the story July 9, also reported that in November 1982 Wilson invited the archbishop to breakfast at his Rome villa in order to meet Smith, who was in Rome at the end of a visit to Europe. It reported that Smith dropped in briefly but quoted Wilson as saying the two did not discuss "any substantive issues."

Wilson also called FBI director William H. Webster this May, using a secured phone line of the U.S. embassy in Rome, to try to find out if any U.S. investigations involved the archbishop, the

newspapers reported. They said that, according to government sources, the archbishop's name has come up in connection with a money-laundering investigation.

Wilson, who was interviewed in Rome by the Los Angeles Times, said he did not recall the alleged letter to Smith or reply from Starr. He said he had Archbishop Marcinkus over for breakfast in November 1982 to meet Smith, but said the two passed the time discussing common interests of golf and tennis. He said he did not ask Smith, then or later, to do anything for Archbishop Marcinkus. He refused to discuss his alleged phone call to Webster, saying, "That's personal."

This July the Vatican, without admitting any guilt or responsibility in the Banco Ambrosiano case, paid \$240 million to settle all claims against it in relation to the Ambrosiano's collapse.



Father Barrett Feted

Several hundred parishioners -- past and present -- family and friends joined Father William Barrett, center, pastor of St. Monica's, for his 25th anniversary celebration of his ordination on Sunday, June 3. Following a concelebrated Mass, a reception took place at the Burgundy Basin Inn.

Memorial Service

Elmira -- A memorial service for persons who have died at St. Joseph's Hospital from Feb. 14 through March 31, will take place at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 3, in the

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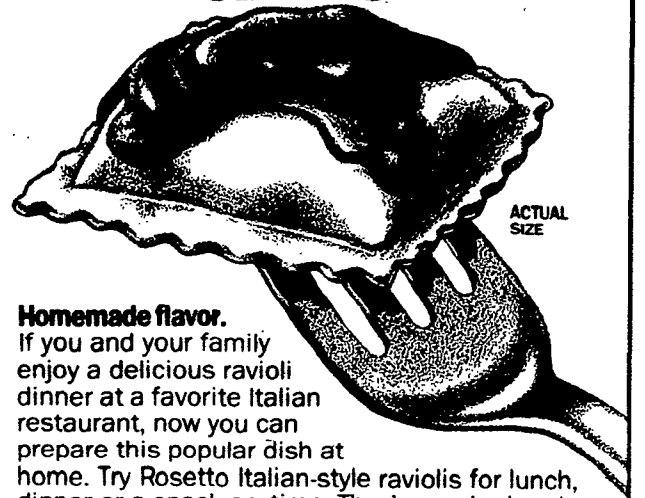
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